

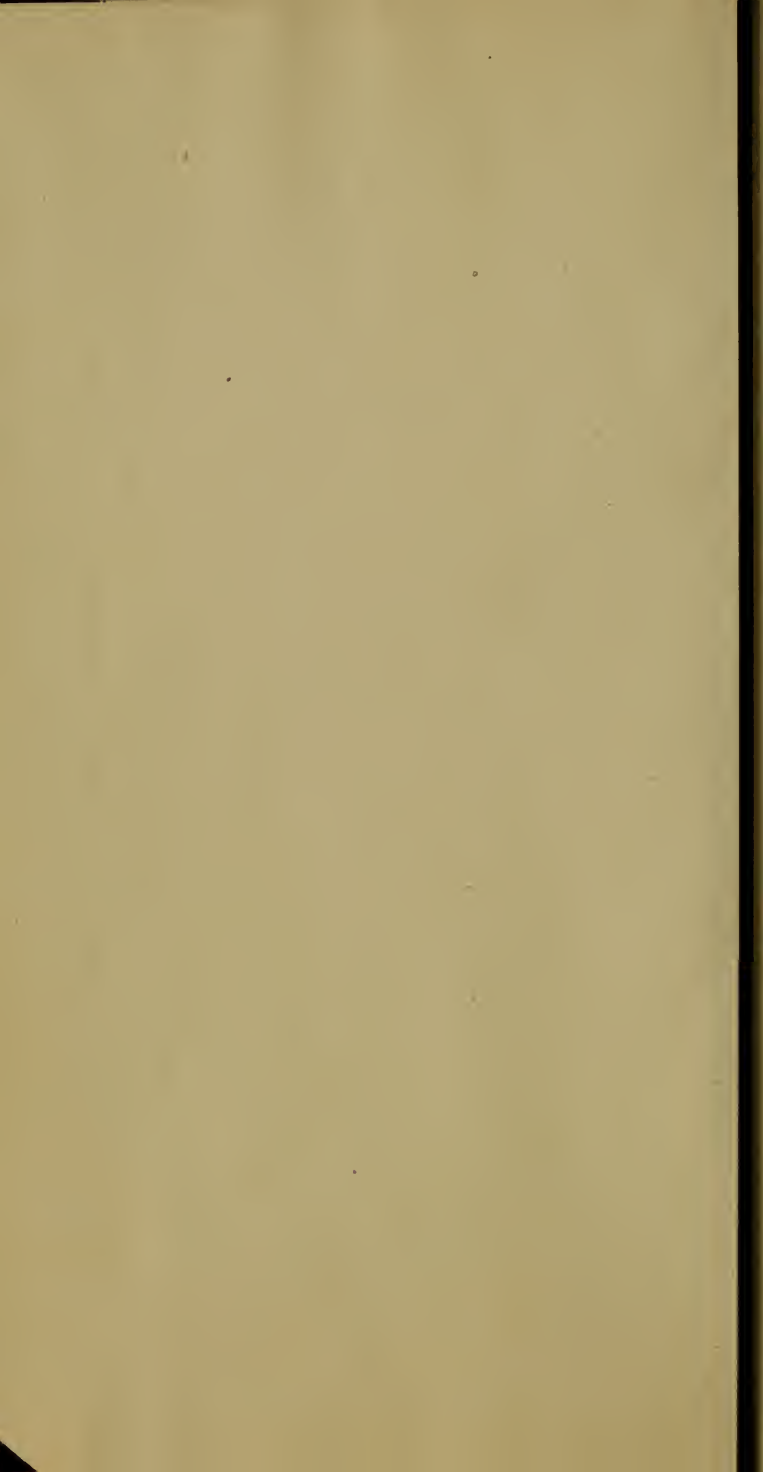


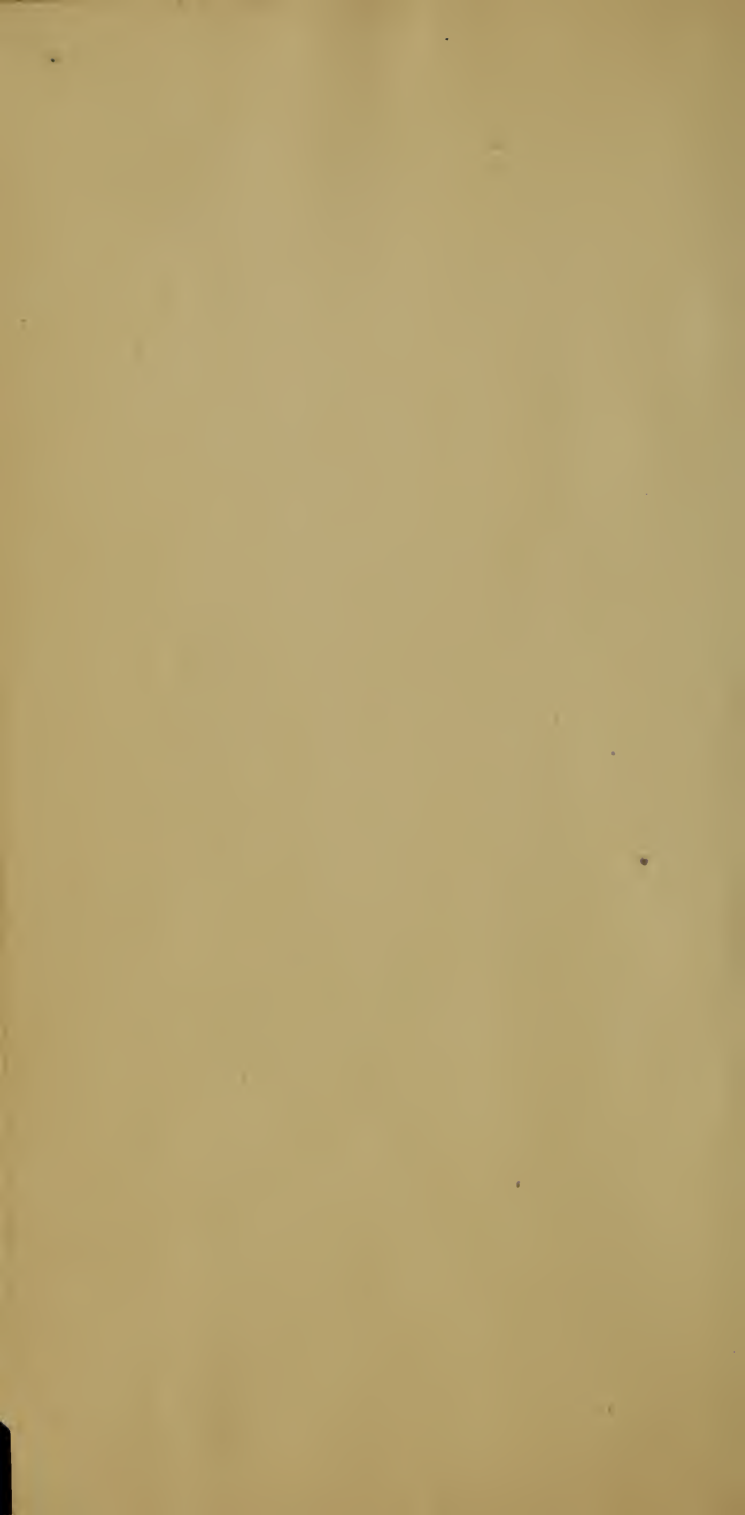
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GOOD BRIDGE

A classification and analysis of the
best plays as played to-day
by the best players

By

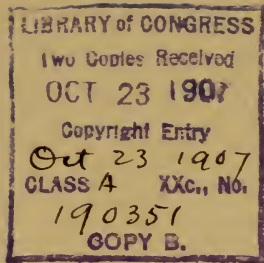
CHARLES STUART STREET

Author of Whist Up To Date, Bridge
Up To Date, and Sixty Bridge
Hands



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New York
Dodd, Mead and Company
1907

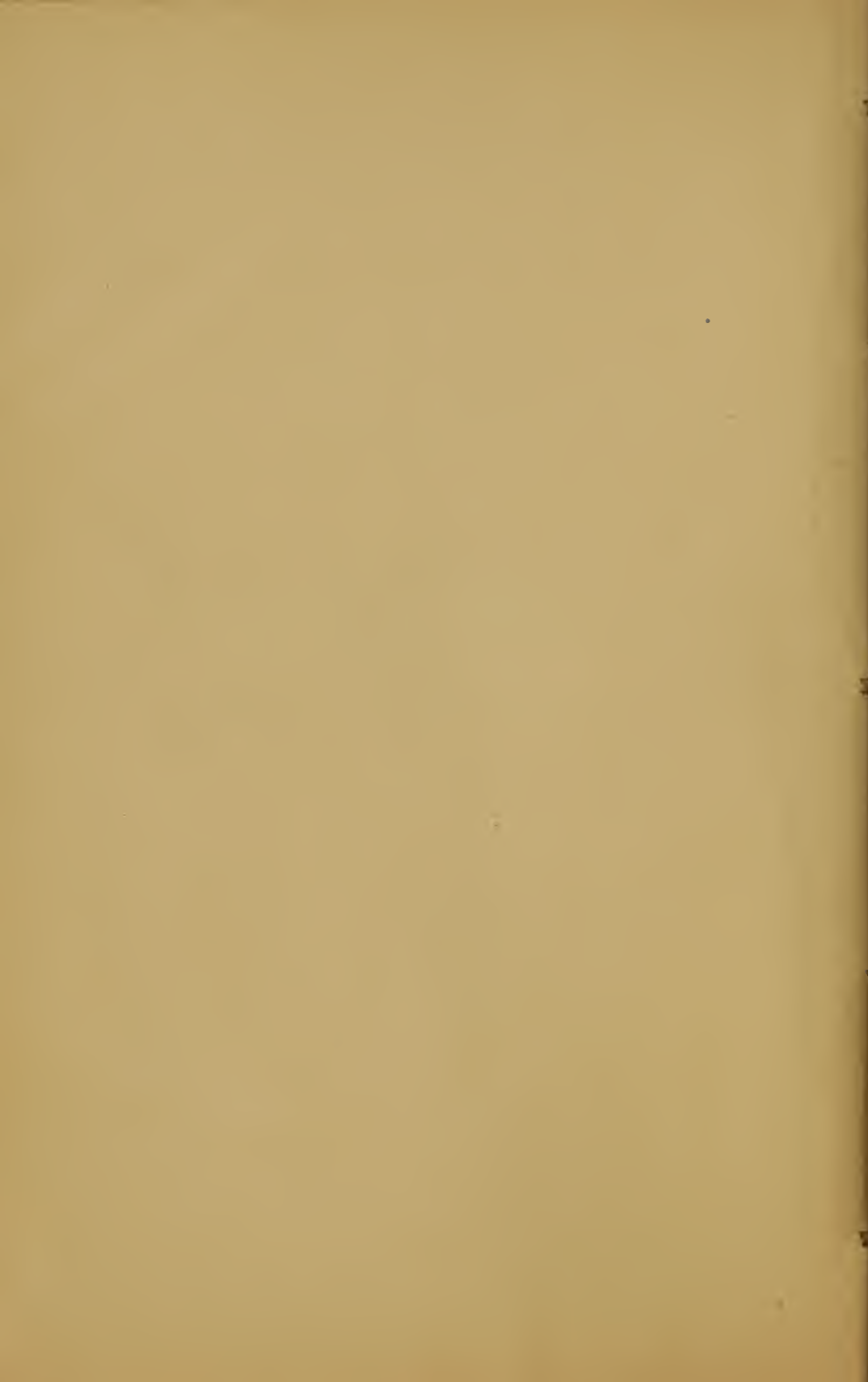


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Published, October, 1907

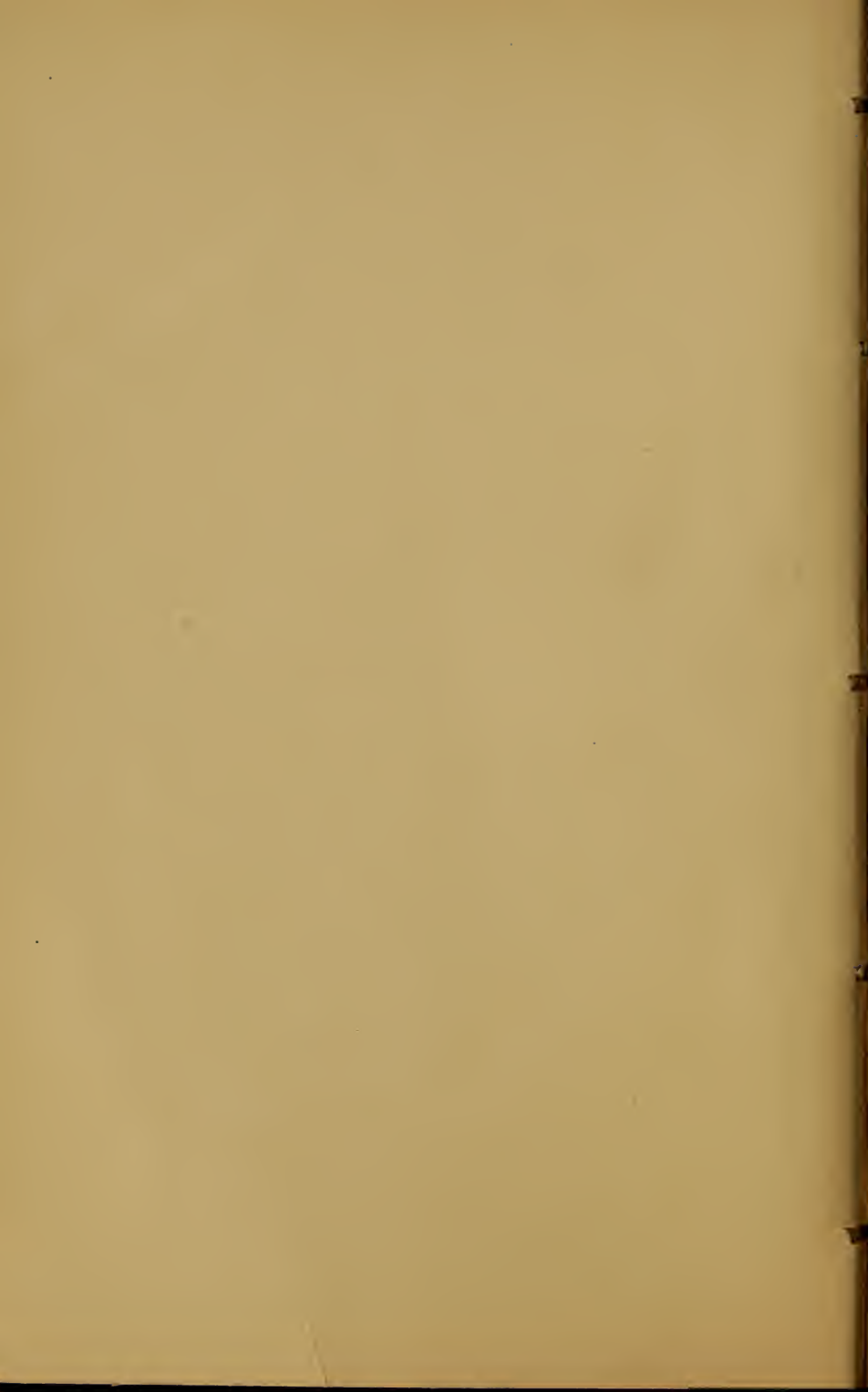


To all my
pupils in Bridge
whose earnest study and faithful application
have encouraged its
production,
this book is respectfully dedicated



INTRODUCTION

SEVEN years ago the author published a small and concise treatise called *Bridge Up To Date*. This treatise he still believes to be the best practical book for the beginner, the early student of the game. But now there seems to be an unsatisfied demand for a book on more advanced lines, one which, while covering partly the same ground covered by *Bridge Up To Date*, does it in a new way; which contains all that is best and latest in the game as played to-day, and withal is not a book of such appalling size or complex arrangement as to daunt the student or be relegated to the library table—in short, a simple, clear, helpful manual. Such the author has tried to write and now offers in the present volume of *Good Bridge*. Much of an elementary character has been left out, but an effort has been made to explain and illustrate those constantly recurring plays which are vital to the game, and spell success.



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CHAPTER I

THE MAKE

Value of the Make

At least sixty per cent. of the game of Bridge lies in the make. A poor player loses tricks, and often the game and rubber, by his play, but so many hands occur in which there is really no play, that such losses are comparatively unimportant compared with the havoc wrought by an injudicious maker. For constantly his decision is invoked when the safety of the game or its success lies in his judgment of the value of his hand. To choose between hearts or diamonds and no-trumps; to select clubs rather than spades; to know when a five-card suit is unsafe and when one of four cards should be chosen; above all to keep an unremitting attention upon the state of the score with its shifting demands—all these are the sterling qualities of a good maker. Once sensible that you are lacking in any such respect, you will find your game appreciably strengthened by attention and study.

Don't be led astray by the spice of danger in

a weak no-trumper when a more conservative suit make will probably win out; don't rebel at making spades either because they count so little or because you dislike to lose your deal. Many hands are either spades or no-trump; the ability to decide which should be your aim. Some hands are pure guesses, but learn to guess intelligently, and constantly correct and revise your ideas through your experience.

Principle of the Make

There is one great, underlying, primary principle upon which the whole structure of the make is founded—a principle so often overlooked that it is here submitted. Four persons at the table are playing for thirteen tricks. With an equal division of the cards each person should take three, leaving one over. Here then appears the great principle: **The thirteenth trick should be in the hand of the player who selects any make except spades.** In short, you should have four probable tricks in your hand, else you are asking your partner to take more tricks than you will take, towards winning **not the game**, but only the odd card! Always bear this in mind and you will find that many a make, hitherto unhesitatingly declared, will

take on a new and tenuous aspect, while possibly also you will meet with fewer disasters. Of course sometimes the score demands a chance shot which at other times would be absurd. But realize that it is a chance shot, that it is **not** sound, and that facing one loss you deliberately risk a greater, in the hope that some peculiar combination of cards will save the day.

No-Trump Makes

There are three requisites for a no-trump make:

1. Ability to take four tricks probably.
2. Protection in three suits.
3. At least one ace, much better two.

There are three exceptional no-trumpers in each of which, in turn, one of these three requisites may be absent.

First Exceptional No-Trumper

Holding three aces but no other trick. Every three-ace hand is not necessarily a no-trumper. Many are hearts, or diamonds, owing to the honours, or to the length of the trump suit, or to the weakness or absence of another suit.

But every three-ace hand which has no other trick in it is a no-trumper, no matter whether it is original or passed, whether the aces are red or black. The power of an ace is enormous, and even if the make results badly due to your partner's having a weak hand, you have always the consolation of thirty in the honour column, a credit not to be lightly despised.

But if three aces and no other trick barely create a no-trumper, largely due to the advantage in honours, the much-cherished rule of making it no-trump with two aces and a third suit protected becomes nonsense. Your honours—your excuse for the make—have vanished, and one of your already too scarce tricks is in peril. If your protected suit offers you a chance for two tricks, or if one of your ace suits holds out possibilities of another trick, with four tricks probable, your make is sound. But players addicted to making it no-trump with two aces and a single guarded king or queen must lose oftener than they win. They persist because it is so much more agreeable to recall success than defeat.

Second Exceptional No-Trumper

One long solid black suit and another ace. The rule demands protection in three suits, but

with a long solid black suit like A K Q J, or A K Q x x (x = a low card), or A K x x x x x, and another ace, red or black, original or passed, you should declare no-trump, even if the other suits are absolutely worthless, or if one of them is lacking. To the novice this make appears dangerous, but it is really much more likely to win than to lose. The objection is often offered that the adversaries can run off the other two suits, and indeed they may do so. But your partner is apt to protect one if not both of them. If he has nothing you may lose the odd, even the game, but the chances are nearly two to one in your favour. In declaring this make, you offset the lack of protection in the third suit, by the number of probable tricks you can make when you once enter.

Third Exceptional No-Trumper

A hand strong in every suit but without an ace. If you have a very strong hand, two honours in each suit, or all suits protected and one long strong black suit, you will probably succeed with a no-trump make. But this occasion is rare, and there is such serious danger from an adverse honour score that any victory you achieve may be almost equal to a defeat.

Additional Hints about No-Trumpers

A one-ace no-trump is usually precarious, and is good only with a very strong hand where all four suits are protected, or where there is some long suit which can be readily established.

Many players are timid about making a passed no-trump with no protection in hearts, or when void of that suit. It is always more than an even chance that your partner can protect the suit you lack, and many a hand not strong enough to declare hearts has good hearts in it, such as A K x, A Q x, K Q x x, or Q J 10 x.

In poor no-trumpers, strong hearts or good protection in hearts is almost a necessity, but in good ones it can be disregarded.

What is Meant by Protection

By protection in any suit is meant the probable chance of keeping the adversaries from making that entire suit, and also the probable chance of making a trick in it yourself. Suits are absolutely protected with an A, or K Q, or Q J 10, or even J 10 9 x, but the lower your best card is, the less chance it has of ultimately winning a trick. K J x, K 10 x, Q J x, Q 10 x, J 10 x x, are all considered as protection, but may all fail. The minimum is K x, Q x x,

J x x x, which are all so dangerous as to presage failure nearly as often as success, and yet must often be chanced. Suits containing a lone K or Q x or J x x are not really protected, although often such cards win.

Declared Trump Makes

In declared trump hands, just as in no-trumpers, you must see the probable chance for four tricks before you declare the trump.

A simple test of all trump makes is to take the number of your trumps, which should be as many as five at least, add in the trump honours a second time (thus each honour in trumps counts double), add in also your probable outside tricks, and if the total makes eight, the make will probably succeed; if it makes seven or less it will probably fail. This is due to the fact that an extra trump, another honour in trumps and an outside trick all strengthen a hand about equally. By an outside trick is meant not only an ace, but a king or a queen sufficiently guarded.

Examples of Declared Trump Makes Adding to Eight

NUMBER OF TRUMPS	TRUMP HONOURS	OUTSIDE TRICKS
7	1	0
7	0	1
6	2	0
6	1	1
6	0	2
5	3	0
5	2	1
5	1	2
5	0	3

No empirical rule can be laid down. This method of counting is advanced rather as a help to test a decision already reached. There are exceptional cases where a hand that counts up to eight will probably fail. Q J 10 x x in trumps with no outside trick counts up to eight, yet would not be a good heart make: so too with J 10 x x x and a guarded Q for an outside trick. But if the weakest eight-count hands are poor, it can easily be seen that almost all seven-count hands are destined to fail.

Remember that when you hold only one honour, or no honour, in trumps there is always

the danger of the adversaries making a large honour score.

Heart Makes

Guided by the suggestion just given, you will find that the average heart make presents few difficulties.

Hearts rather than No-Trump

Many hands containing three aces should be made hearts rather than no-trump, especially with any of the following combinations:

1. Four honours in hearts.
2. A strong heart suit, a second long and strong suit, the ace alone of the third suit, and no trick possible in the fourth.
3. A very long heart suit of six or seven, with some other suit very short or missing.

But unless your heart suit contains simple honours or great length, the make of no-trump should be given the preference.

Examples of Hearts rather than No-Trump

HEARTS	DIAMONDS	CLUBS	SPADES
A K Q 10	A 7 5	A 3 2	9 6
A K Q 5 3	A K 10 6 2	A	8 4
A K 6 4 3 2	A	A 9 7 5	9 8
A Q 8 6 5 4 2	A 9 7 3	A 2	—

Four-card Heart Makes

Four-card heart makes are good only when you have three honours in trumps, two of them being the A, K or Q, together with several tricks outside, or another strong suit. They should really add up to nine rather than eight, by the method outlined on page 7. Such hands as original makes are often overlooked and yet are very valuable. They may not win the game, but they often secure for you a good start for the next deal.

Hearts rather than Diamonds

Occasionally a hand occurs wherein it is difficult to choose between hearts and diamonds. But, putting aside the question of honours, you should always be guided by the fact that it takes one less trick to win the game in hearts than in diamonds, and that the longer suit, even if not made the trump, may be equally good as a side suit.

Examples of Hearts rather than Diamonds

HEARTS	DIAMONDS	CLUBS	SPADES
A K Q 4 2	A K 10 6 5 3	7	4
K Q J 8 4	A K Q 4 2	3 2	6
A K Q 4 3	A K Q J	K 7 6 5	—

In the first example of these hands, with a heart make you can afford to lose a diamond while clearing the suit, besides the club and the spade, and still win the game. While if diamonds were trumps the loss of three tricks would prevent your going out.

In the second example with hearts as trumps your chance of exhausting the trumps and making the diamond suit is just as good as if they were transposed, and you can afford to lose one more trick.

In the third example, while the honours in diamonds are attractive, the surer path to the game lies in having the heart suit for the trumps. You are nearly certain to be forced on the spades and with hearts as trumps you can survive a force which might ruin a diamond hand.

Diamond Makes

The current prejudice against diamond makes is a mystery. From a zero score it is difficult to go out at diamonds, but it is certainly better to reach as far as 24 or 18 or even 12 with a fair diamond make than to chance a spade make from your partner. It is said you should not declare diamonds because there are two makes better, either of which your partner may have. Granted, but there are also two makes worse,

one of which you will probably not be allowed to play, or which will be doubled to your loss. Every hand cannot be hearts or no-trumps, and only a small percentage of games are won in a single deal. It is an enormous advantage on your second deal to have already gained a start of 6 or more. With such a start of only 6, good average diamond makes become compulsory. **It takes no more tricks to go out from a score of 6 at diamonds than from zero at hearts,** and yet many a player, foolishly biassed, passes a good diamond make with a score of 6, when had that identical make been transposed to hearts and the score zero, he would have considered the hand very good and would have gleefully made it hearts.

When to Declare Diamonds Originally

1. When holding four honours (unless hearts or no-trump seems stronger).
2. When playing to the score, 6 or more.
3. When your hand is a little stronger than it would have to be to declare hearts (adding to 9 or more. See page 9).
4. With a very long (even if not strong) suit of diamonds, with hearts weak or missing, and a generally poor hand. This is a safety make, as your hand cannot probably help any make your partner might declare, and if his hand

were not very strong, you might lose disastrously.

Passed Diamond Makes

A passed diamond make falls exactly into the rule for all makes and should be treated exactly as if it were hearts.

Original Four-Card Diamond Makes

Four-card diamond makes should be declared originally only when holding four honours in trumps, or when playing to the score, and holding three high honours and several other tricks.

General Hints on Diamond Makes

You should remember that when you hold nine red cards, your partner will probably have to declare a black make.

It is better to declare diamonds when holding one ace in your hand than with none, as, in the latter case, your partner has more chance for a no-trumper.

Try to be consistent in practising your diamond makes, and you will win sometimes. If you keep changing your ideas, influenced by one failure or by several, you will probably always choose the wrong time.

Above all, unless your partner is a thoroughly good player, don't heed his criticism, which is

valueless, being invariably based on result. When he has nothing he will commend your diamond make, as he would have had to declare spades. On the other hand, when he has a hundred aces, or four honours in hearts, he will probably score you roundly for not passing the make, yet your hand would be the same in either case.

Original Club Makes

An original club make is sound in three cases only :

1. When the score is 14 or more, and you have a strong club hand with two or three tricks outside.
2. When you have four honours and the score is in a safe position, as in the early part of the first game, or in the second, when you have won the first. But not in the rubber game, nor in the second game when you have lost the first.
3. In a badly balanced hand which is very long in clubs and is void of one red suit, or is weak in both red suits. Here it becomes a safety make. If you pass the make with such a hand, your partner is most likely to declare your missing suit, or one of your weak suits, and, while his make might be perfectly just, it would probably result in ruin.

Passed Club Makes

The general rule which applies to hearts and diamonds also applies to clubs. Any hand which adds to eight can be declared clubs.

Original Spade Makes

Unless the score is in desperate straits it is unwise to pass a hand that has not a possible trick in it. Therefore, in any game, **when the score of that game is not greatly adverse**, an original spade make is justifiable if you hold a blank hand. But not if you hold an ace, or a king, or a queen guarded, even though they are in the spade suit.

The accurate analysis of over one thousand hands shows that only one in twenty-five is strong enough to take the odd card unassisted. By making it spades originally, with hands containing no tricks, you will once in a while interfere with a good make on the part of your partner, you will sometimes lose a good honour score, but you will constantly save games and rubbers.

Passed Spade Makes

One great distinguishing mark of a good player is his willingness to declare spades; to realise that his hand is a losing hand, and not

to grasp futilely at what does not exist. You must learn to accept the situation; the deal was a mistake; your partner couldn't declare a trump, you cannot. Be resigned to your loss, and don't try to press forward, hoping that **this time** you will make a lucky hit.

Indeed, in one way, you should deem yourself lucky to have such a bad hand when it is your deal. If the adversaries could have the declaration, an enormous game for them would probably result, while, as it is, all they can score is 4 a trick on doubled spades.

Spades rather than Clubs

An insidious doctrine has lately crept forth and been exploited to the effect that weak club makes in the passed hand are preferable to spades when the spades are very weak or very short. The excuse alleged is that your partner may have a strong black suit, and the chances are equal that it is clubs. But the fact is overlooked that if you have four or five poor clubs, of the nine or eight remaining your partner is not likely to have many, while, on the other hand, if you have only one spade or none, that is probably his suit.

Make it clubs when your make is justified, when your hand adds to eight, when you think you have a fair chance to take four tricks. But

don't make it clubs on four to the king, jack, because you have only one spade and are afraid of the adversaries' doubling. If your spade make is doubled the loss is rarely overwhelming, but a weak club make doubled may give the adversaries the game. Unless the club make you are considering looks strong enough for four tricks, abandon all idea of it, be content with the more modest spade, and await your next deal.

Makes to the Score

When you have won the first game your position is fairly safe, so it is wise to be a little conservative and make only according to the best rules and the soundest principles. It is no time to take a risk. The adversaries must win two games in succession to defeat you, and the odds are against them.

But when the score is adverse, when you have lost the first game, or when the adversaries are well along in the rubber game, it is often practically compulsory to make a declaration that at safer times would be inexcusable. Unnaturally light no-trumpers, apparently weak heart makes, or even admittedly insufficient diamonds might meet with success and should be tried. Any possible chance should be taken when ruin impends; it really matters little if

the adversaries' score is made a bit larger, and you might save a huge loss.

When your score is 22 or more and your partner passes the make, he practically asks you for your best suit. Here four-card makes with two honours, such as K Q x x, K J x x, K 10 x x, and even Q 10 x x, are often successful if you have a trick or two outside. Your partner many times passes a moderately good hand, able to support any make, but not strong enough for a make itself.

CHAPTER II

DOUBLING

EXCEPT in rare cases where the doubler has a wonderful hand which is worth seven fairly sure tricks, all doubling is a matter of the score. A double which at one point in the score would be wise, at another is absurd.

Double only when the value of the trick so increased will benefit you more than it will the adversaries.

Always consider the possibility of a redouble, and the effect of that on the score.

Doubling No-Trump

When you are the leader you can double no-trump when holding seven fairly sure tricks in your own hand, such as:

1. A K Q J x x x.
2. A K Q J x x and another ace, or a king and queen.
3. A K Q x x x x.
4. A K Q x x x and another ace or a king and queen.
5. A K x x x x x would be very doubtful.

With fewer than seven tricks you should

double only when the score demands it. If the adversaries are 18 and you are 16, you can double with six tricks, or a very good general hand. One trick takes them out anyhow, and one trick unless doubled will not win you the game. But if they are 16 and you are 18, your double would aid their side much more than it would yours, and should not be tried. Again at 12 or 16 apiece in the rubber game it would be silly to double, as the odd trick would then let them out; even if your combined hands prove strong in such a case, and you win the odd, you have by no means lost your chance, as you now have the deal at 24 or 28. As for the childish superstition about winning a game from a score of 28, it is only because it is so remarkable that neither you nor your partner can make a declaration to carry you out, that the fact is remembered.

The Heart Convention

By the heart convention is meant the agreement that, if third hand doubles, the leader should lead his best heart **regardless of number**. More tricks are lost than are won from the misunderstanding resulting from the lead of a low heart when the leader has a long heart suit. By doubling, your partner assumes control, and

demands absolutely one thing, your best heart; to lead him aught else is to mislead him temporarily, perhaps to the downfall of the hand.

For you to double third hand, playing this customary convention, means that you want and expect such a lead. Therefore you must have a strong heart suit (which is always probable, as the maker would have chosen hearts rather than no-trump, if long and strong in hearts), or another solid suit with the ace of hearts, or a hand consisting of great general strength, which appears good enough to defeat the maker, with average aid from your partner. You have a much better chance with a generally strong hand if the maker is on your right; when he is on your left it is very dangerous, as some of the high cards you have counted upon as tricks may be led through and captured.

If you as leader have no heart, you should open your best suit as you would have done otherwise, except that holding an A K suit you should lead the king first to view the dummy and try to determine how best to help your partner by your next lead.

The Short Suit Convention

Many players, especially in England, prefer not to use the heart convention, but to have more latitude, to double with any good long

suit, it being understood beforehand that partner is to lead his shortest suit. But this scheme of play is false in theory and dangerous in practice, for several reasons. First, it encourages too much doubling and constantly tempts sanguine players to destruction. Second, it is most uncertain, as partner may have two suits equally short and may choose the wrong one. Third, the maker may have made it no-trump, also with one great long suit. Should that happen to be the leader's short suit, which is quite likely, the result is hardly profitable. A doubled no-trumper is too expensive, too delicate to trifle with. It is best to be sure that when such a great risk has been assumed, a certain definite result will ensue.

Doubling Hearts, Diamonds or Clubs

If the maker will average four tricks on his make, it seems fair to think that either adversary can double when holding five probable tricks, always with an eye on the score. And yet the mere fact of a double being announced by either adversary so locates the strength of the hand that often it costs a trick.

If the make has been declared on your right so that you play **after** the maker and not **before** him, your position is much stronger.

When the make has been declared on your left, your position is weak, and you must not double unless your hand is exceptionally strong and the score adverse.

Doubling Spades Declared by Dummy

Double spades only with a really good hand, or when your position in the score will be improved more than the adversaries'. If their score is such that 2 will not help them and 4 will, it is foolish to double on just an average hand.

You can double spades when you are strong in spades, even if the red suits are weak, as, in the absence of a red make by the adversary, you can certainly count on some red strength in your partner's hand.

You can also double spades if weak in spades, but strong in the side suits. But this is more dangerous. In such a double be sure you are well protected in **clubs**. You never know whether dummy has made it spades on strength or weakness—he may have one or he may have seven. If it happens that he is strong in spades, and the dealer has a strong suit of clubs, they may redouble, and win the game at 8 a trick. Therefore never double spades when weak in both black suits.

Doubling Original Spades

A spade make declared by the dealer from a supposedly worthless hand seems safer to double than a passed spade, yet even here the dummy may have a very strong hand and redouble. Bear in mind the principle already stated: double only when your position can be improved and when the adversaries will not be materially aided.

Examples of Good Doubles in Spades

1. The adversaries are 0, you are 2. The odd at 4 doesn't help them on their next deal, but is of great advantage to you.

2. The adversaries are 6, you are 10. Again the odd at 4 does not help them much, but aids you enormously.

3. They are less than 14 on the first game and you are 18 or more. With spades at 4 you might win your first game, and begin your second on your own deal, while even if they redoubled it would be difficult for them to take the three tricks needful for the game.

The ideal places in the score to deal from are 6, 12, 14, 18, 22, 24. Whenever you can move into one of these positions by winning a trick at doubled spades, and when at the same

time you will not help the adversaries much should they win it, a double must be considered with a fair hand.

Remember it is always dangerous to double spades unless holding a very strong hand, when the adversaries are as much as 14, as a redouble may carry them out.

Caution in Doubling

Constant doubling is not the mark of a very good player. Although such a one is often a helpful adversary, he is also unfortunately a most dangerous partner, his action being based less on judgment and attention to the score than on greed, haste, or a false estimate of his hand.

Redoubling

After the double and the redouble, it is evident that some one is making a mistake. When such redoubling is carried to the fantastic height of hundreds per trick, it is due to the fact that the table contains at least one poor player, perhaps more, and that they forget they are playing the mathematical game of Bridge, instead of the sensational one of Poker.

As protection against such blind ignorance or wilful recklessness, it is generally agreed to

cease doubling when the value of the trick exceeds 100 points.

The best rule, the one adopted by the Whist Club of New York, is that redoubling can be carried past 100 only when no player at the table objects—any one being able to end it by a simple protest.

CHAPTER III

THE OPENING LEADS

Opening Lead at No-Trump

IN opening your hand against a no-trump make you should usually lead your longest suit in the hope that that may prove the adversaries' weak suit, and that you may establish it and bring it in. In suits of equal length, the one with more honours or higher cards in it should be chosen. In suits almost equal it is better to select a red suit rather than a black, preferably hearts, on the ground that the maker would have chosen hearts rather than no-trump if he had been very strong in that suit.

If your longest suit contains three honours, two of which are in sequence, you should lead the top of the sequence. The single exception is A K 10 suits, when fourth-best is usually led.

There are other combinations also which advanced play has shown should be led high, although they do not contain three honours. These combinations are here given in tabulated form for easy reference or study.

List of Leads when Holding Three Honours

FROM SUITS CONTAINING	LEAD	NOTES
A K Q	A	The old lead was the K. Now A is led to show a suit very strong or very long.
A K J	A	The modern lead (unless with 4 cards only) is again the A, which asks for your partner's Q. Holding the Q, he should play it no matter how many he has in suit, unless he thereby makes a trick good in dummy.
K Q J	K	Some players persist in leading the 10 from this last combination. Such a lead is a moss-grown relic of Whist, and inverts the solid Bridge principle of always leading the top of sequence cards.
K Q 10	K	
A Q J	Q	
Q J 10	Q	
A J 10	J	
K J 10	J	

List of Leads Without Three Honours

FROM SUITS CONTAINING	LEAD	NOTES
A K x x x x x	A	} On account of your great length the other 6 cards may be divided evenly and will therefore fall.
K Q x x x x x	K	
A Q J and others	A	} If you also hold an outside ace.
A K x x x x	K	
A K x x x	K	
K Q x x x x	K	
K Q x x x	K	

In these last five cases, holding an outside ace, you lead high rather than fourth-best, as you are not dependent upon your partner's returning your suit, but can clear it yourself and enter on your side ace to make it.

FROM SUITS CONTAIN- ING	LEAD	NOTES
Q J 9	Q	} While these suits do not contain 3 honours, the combinations are too valuable to start low. Experience teaches that it is better to lead high.
J 10 9	J	
J 10 8	J	
10 9 8	10	
		With more than 5 in suit, lead fourth-best.

Complete List of High Opening Leads at No-Trump

For the convenience of reference, a complete list of the no-trump leads is here given, showing the different combinations from which each high card can be properly led.

In the following set of leads each card as a rule announces the card below it and denies the one above. It is true that the king may show either ace or queen, but the queen positively shows the jack and denies the king; the jack shows the ten and denies the queen. Objection is sometimes made to the present jack lead, on the ground that it is too promiscuous, that it is used for too many combinations. But it must be

remembered that your partner will return your lead unless he has something much better to do, and that the adversary is left quite in the dark as to just where are situated the high cards of that suit.

LEAD	WHEN HOLDING
A	A K Q x or more A K x x x x x or more A K J x x or more A Q J x x x x A Q J x x or more, when holding another ace
K	A K x x x x A K x x x } When holding another ace A K J x K Q J suits K Q 10 suits
Q	A Q J suits, unless holding another ace Q J 10 suits Q J 9 suits
J	A J 10 suits K J 10 suits J 10 9 suits J 10 8 suits
10	10 9 8 x x 10 9 8 x

The Lead of the Fourth-best

Not having any of the above combinations it is customary to lead the fourth-best card of your long suit, with the idea of informing your partner that you have exactly three cards higher, possibly some lower.

Short Suit Opening at No-Trump

Almost any five-card suit is worth opening no matter how poor it is. Its length is its protection. Any four-card suit with three or two honours in it is a fair lead. But if your best suit is of four cards only, and also if it contains only one honour or no honour, it is best not to open it. If it has no honour in it, when your partner gains the lead, he wastes his effort in returning it, as you will probably never win a trick in it. If it contains a jack or a queen, you, by opening such a suit, imperil a trick you might otherwise make. So too with a king, it is much better to wait. And nearly the worst of all is a four-card suit headed by an ace; if your partner wins and returns it, you are simply establishing one trick or more for the dealer, which he otherwise might not be able to make. If you wait until forced to play the

ace you will know better what to lead for your partner's benefit.

Your combined efforts should be to find the best suit you have between you and establish it. You have none; try to find his.

If you cannot open your four-card suit, you should select a short suit, preferably red, and of the two red suits preferably hearts.

A singleton is a good lead, on the ground that your shortest suit may well be your partner's longest.

Any two-card suit headed by jack or lower is good. Queen and one low is bad, as the queen is likely to win on a finesse.

Three-card suits are not good unless headed by strengthening cards that will not harm your partner's hand. Q J x, J 10 x, 10 9 x, or even 9 x x are fairly good, but lower than the 9 such suits are not of much avail. J x x should be avoided, as it may win a trick; it is nearly the same as Q x.

With a hand containing one four-card suit and three of three cards each, it may be impossible to open any of the three-card suits, on account of protecting honours, or they may be too poor to help your partner. In such a case you are forced to lead the four-card suit. But if it contains no honour, you would better lead the top

of it. Such a lead will probably be high enough to warn your partner of the futility of returning it.

The Lead of the Lowest Card rather than the Fourth-best

The writer is convinced that it is a much stronger play with a good partner to lead the lowest card of a good suit and not the fourth-best. There is no doubt but that the fourth-best lead gives more valuable information to the dealer than to the partner. The dealer, with all his resources in view, can utilise to great advantage the important knowledge a fourth-best card conveys, and can often determine his second hand play with accuracy. On the other hand, the fourth-best really does your partner but little good. Dummy determines your partner's play third in hand. If there is no high card in dummy, your partner will play his highest card or one in sequence to it upon your lead; similarly if there is a high card in dummy sufficiently protected to become a trick, he must finesse against it if possible. The only conceivable disadvantage occurs when your partner is in doubt whether to return your suit or to open one of his own, which may be better. But by reserving the lead of

the lowest card to show a suit of value, such as one containing two honours, or one honour as high as the queen, a **good** partner can almost always read the situation and choose correctly.

When you are forced to open a suit **not** containing two honours or a card as high as the queen, you can lead not your lowest card, but your next to the lowest; this rarely will be misread. Objection may be made that your partner cannot always distinguish whether the card you lead is your lowest or not, but you will find that he will be able to do so surprisingly often.

This play was advocated by the writer to be used in the game of Whist many years ago; it has been used constantly and successfully by winning teams ever since. Its use in Bridge is equally valuable and its advantage becomes ever more apparent in its use. It is, therefore, recommended to good players with the certainty that they will find it of benefit.

When using this lead it is only fair to announce the fact to your adversaries to avoid the accusation of private conventions.

Opening Leads in Declared Trump Hands

In declared trump hands it is no longer a question, as in old-fashioned Whist or as in no-trumpers, of leading your long suit in the hope

that you can establish it, exhaust the trumps and bring it in. The strength in trumps is declared against you, and you and your partner are embarked on what is probably a losing venture. Your efforts must be devoted first towards saving the game and secondly towards getting the odd if possible. Only when you hold trump strength (four or more) can you dare to attack; all other openings are more or less defensive. Therefore your opening leads divide themselves into two classes:

Opening Leads when not Holding Trump Strength

The old idea used to be that you should lead an ace at almost any cost in order to see dummy, but the game of Bridge has progressed and ace leads have become less and less desirable. It has been found better to use other openings which do not result in establishing a suit for the adversary, the disastrous effect an ace lead sometimes has, while the view of the dummy, so dearly obtained, is often of little value and void of suggestion.

In a declared trump hand holding trump weakness (three or fewer) your only advantageous leads are suits headed by two cards in sequence, short suits, and, last and rarely, an

ace. The length of the suit you open is usually immaterial, as the possibility of establishing it for future use is remote. The life of a suit is usually only two rounds; after that, some one is likely to fail. When every one follows to the third round the fact is so unusual that it evokes comment. Therefore your efforts must be directed towards securing one of those first two tricks, if not both. Every time you open a suit which contains a tenace or a single high card you are opening your hand at a disadvantage that may cost you a trick.

The Seven Good Leads in Declared Trump Hands when Weak in Trumps

There are seven good leads in declared trump hands when you are weak in trumps. These are listed below. In leading any sequence always lead the top of it, except with A K, when you should lead K to show A.

1. A K alone or with others.
2. K Q alone or with others (except with K Q x, which it is better to avoid).
3. A singleton (except K).
4. Q J alone or with others.
5. J 10 alone or with others.
6. A two-card suit (except A Q, A J, K J, or K x).

7. An ace in a suit of four or more (never from A x x).

Notes on the Above Seven Leads

These openings should be chosen in the order in which they occur. Run down the list until you find the first one that your hand contains. Don't lead the fifth-best opening if you hold the second. They have been carefully weighed, tested and listed according to value. An analysis of them follows:

1. A K alone or with others.

With A K alone lead A, then K. Otherwise lead K to show A. This lead is absolutely the best, as the first trick saves a grand slam, and the second a small one. In hearts, for example, the total value of these two tricks is 56 points, 16 for the tricks and 40 for the slam.

2. K Q alone or with others.

With K Q J, or K Q 10, or K Q and several others this lead is the second-best, but with K Q x it is wise to wait for the chance of making two tricks. This is a rare occasion where the length of your suit, or rather the lack of it, counts.

3. A singleton.

Don't lead a singleton when holding either of the above combinations. As against the K Q lead, in each case you are trying for the second trick in the suit. But with the singleton, if the adversaries exhaust your trumps, you will not be able to take it; with the K Q lead you probably will.

4. Q J alone or with others.

Here the queen is a good lead. You always have the chance of catching the king in dummy, while if your partner has either king or ace, or both, your opening will be most advantageous. If he has nothing, you are at least left with the second-best card of the suit, and have done no harm.

5. J 10 alone or with others.

This lead is also apt to be helpful to your partner, and may enable him to catch a high card in dummy. If your partner has nothing, your lead does no harm; the adversary is only making tricks he is sure to make in any event.

6. A two-card suit.

Except A Q, A J, K J, K x. Any other two-card suit is apt to prove a good lead, especially one that may help your partner, like Q x, J x, or 10 x.

7. Ace in a suit of four or more.

Not, however, when holding also Q or J. Never open low from a suit of four or more containing an ace. From A x x, or A x, a low lead is often not bad and frequently works very well. But with more than three there is always a chance that your ace may be trumped on the second round. Ace from A x x is about as bad a lead as can be made. The suit is too long to trump, too short to establish. It usually results in establishing a suit for the adversary and making his play extremely simple.

Harmless Leads and Bad Leads

If you cannot open your hand with any one of the above seven leads you will probably have to open it at a disadvantage. Still there are certain suits which are rather harmless to open, such as those headed by a 10, 9 or by a 9, 8, in both cases the higher card being led regardless of length.

Three-card suits headed by a 10 or 9 are by no means good, but can be employed when all the other suits are more dangerous. The highest card should be led and followed by the next highest. When you play the lowest card of your weak suit, it should be your last card in that suit.

Fourth-best from a king is a bad lead and should be avoided. If the adversary wins the first trick with any card except the ace, your king is postponed until the third round and probably will be trumped. If you wait until some one else leads that suit you will make your king on the first or the second trick, except in the one case where the ace lies beyond you and your partner has no card so high as the jack. But fourth-best from a queen is not a bad opening. If your partner has A, K, or J, you accomplish something at once, and if he has nothing to help you with, your chances of making your queen are very slender, even if you wait.

Tenace suits, suits with a break in them like A Q, A J or K J, should be avoided, as it is so much more advantageous for them to be led to you.

A Trump Lead

A weak trump lead is often a good opening when your position is as follows:

1. It must be a passed make, so that you are leading through strength.
2. Your trumps must be valueless, such as J x, or 10 x, or any singleton except a king.
3. All your other suits must contain the pos-

sibilities of tricks, and must be such that you want them led to you.

With an A K suit, or a good K Q suit, or a short suit a trump lead is not sound.

This lead should tell your partner that you can be counted upon for something in all the other suits. With this information he is not bound to return your trump lead, but probably should lead up to dummy's weakest suit.

Opening Leads when Holding Trump Strength

In declared trump hands when you hold trump strength (any four or more) you are no longer on the defensive, you can attack. There is a fair chance that you may beat the adversary at his own game. All short leads should be avoided and you should open your longest suit. If the maker should happen to have only five trumps, the most likely case, you may be able to establish your suit and perhaps force him first. In that case you meet on equal grounds, you have as many trumps as he has, his marked superiority has vanished, and you may win out on the hand. After he has been forced once, even if your trumps are all small, it takes all his remaining trumps to exhaust yours, and the rest of the hand becomes a no-trumper, with

the advantage to whosoever has the best suits.

Therefore, in such hands, begin with your longest suit, avoid establishing suits for the dealer, and don't lead off aces, but let the hand develop always on the lines of trying to force the adversary without being forced yourself.

Leading after Partner has Doubled

In opening your hand after your partner has doubled hearts, diamonds, or clubs, your best play usually is your highest trump if it is a **passed make**, and you are therefore leading through strength. But with an A K suit it is better to lead the king first and look at the dummy; or with a singleton and a few weak trumps it is better to open the singleton, as your partner must conclude that either you have no trumps or that you are bent upon some plan which he should proceed to develop, if necessary, by letting you use your trumps first. If the make is an original one, with the strength lying beyond your partner, do not lead trumps, but open your hand naturally.

When spades are doubled, again open an A K suit or a singleton, no matter how many trumps you may have; when you have neither of these two leads, you should lead trumps if

you have **one**, or **four or more**, but not otherwise. If you have only one trump, it is likely your partner is strong in trumps, and your lead will help him; if you have four or more, his strength probably lies in the side suits, and you are strong enough to try to exhaust trumps for his benefit.

If you can depend upon your partner to lead in this common-sense way, you will be able to read his hand easily. If he leads trumps he has either a singleton trump or four or more; if he does not lead them, he is either trying for a ruff, or has two or three trumps.

CHAPTER IV

SECOND HAND PLAY

WHEN the lead has been made and dummy is laid down on the table, you as dealer are often called upon to decide upon a second hand play, on which may rest the success or failure of the hand. There are several cases possible:

You and dummy may have so many of the adversary's suit that you can play for it yourself.

Or you may be able to win two tricks in it, in which case it is usually wise to win the first at once, as you still retain command of the suit (see Holding Up, page 78).

Or you may have one sure trick and a possible second.

Or you may have one sure trick which becomes a question of holding up to block the suit.

Or, finally, you may have only one doubtful trick, which, if made, will save the day.

Therefore it is essential to understand certain underlying principles of second hand play, and to realise that cards like a king, a queen, or a jack in the dummy should sometimes be

chanced, and yet often should not be played, in that they are needed to protect some cards in your own hand.

The usual case is when you hold one high card singly guarded in dummy, and your rule is as follows:

Rule for Second Hand Play, from Dummy, in No-Trump

With a high card singly guarded in dummy, play high usually, but not if you hold in your own hand J x x, 10 x x x, or any two honours, one of which is the 10.

List of Second Hand Plays, from Dummy, in No-Trump

The various cases are as follows: an unimportant card is led, one not involving the Rule of Eleven. In all the following diagrams you are supposed to be sitting at the table, with your hand directly in front of you, with dummy opposite, and the lead coming from your left. There are usually three cards placed in your hand for illustration; the rule holds as well if there are more. The letter x equals any card not an honour.

K x**A x x**

A question of entry or the position of the next lead. If other things are equal, play king, as you can retain the command longer with the ace.

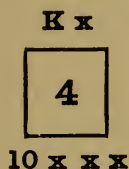
K x**Q x x**

Play king. If it wins, avoid taking any chance to let your right-hand adversary win a trick. In other words, finesse if possible to lose to the left, so that your queen will be led up to and not through.

K x**J x x**

Play low. Your king is needed to protect your jack. In this way you are sure of one trick, no matter how the cards lie. But if

you play high and lose to the ace, your jack may be led through and you will lose the whole suit.



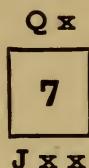
Play low for the same reason as in case 3. Your king is needed to protect the ten.



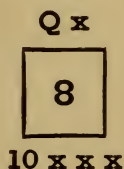
Play queen. You have a sure trick in the ace. More likely than not the leader has the king. If so, you must make the queen now or never.



The same as case 2, as king and queen are of equal value when you hold them both.



Play low, as queen is needed to protect jack. If third hand has ace or king, to play your queen is a useless effort; if not, you will win with the jack. Similar to case 3.



The same as case 4. Your queen is needed to prevent the original leader from finessing against your ten on the return of the suit.



Play jack. The leader may have opened a K Q suit.

J x
10
 K x x

Play jack; it is your only chance to make two tricks. If it wins, finesse to lose to your left.

J x
11
 Q x x

Play low. Exactly like case 7, although an apparent exception to the rule.

J x
12
 10 x x x

Like case 8. Your jack is needed to protect your ten.

We now come to cases illustrating the second part of the rule where a high card singly guarded lies in dummy and you have two honours in your own hand.

K x

13

A Q x

Unless you need the king for an entry later, play it to clear the suit.

K x

14

A J x

Play low and you must make three tricks. The one real exception to the rule, but one so evident that no comment is necessary.

K x

15

A 10 x

Play low, as you may win with the ten. However, should the hand demand an immediate lead from dummy, the king would be a permissible play.

K x

16

Q J x

Play king to clear the suit.

K x

17

Q 10 x

Play low, as you will then be sure of two tricks.

K x

18

J 10 x

If you wish the lead to come from the dummy, play king. You are sure of one trick no matter how you play.

Q x

19

A K x

Play queen. The same as case 13.

Q x

20

A J x

Play queen. If it wins, finesse to the left to coax another lead up to your A J.

Q x

21

A 10 x

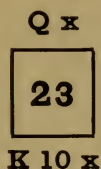
Play low. You are sure of two tricks, no matter what third hand plays. But should you play the queen and it be covered by the king, forcing your ace, your ten might later be led through and captured.

Q x

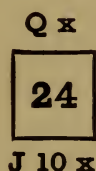
22

K J x

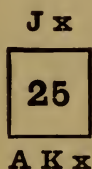
Play queen. Similar to case 16.



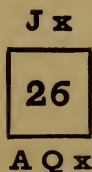
Play low. Similar to case 17.



Play queen if you wish dummy to lead. No matter what you play, you are sure of one trick. Similar to case 18.



Play jack. If it doesn't make now it probably never will make.



Play jack and finesse, if it wins, to the left.

J x

27

A 10 x

Play low, as the jack is needed to protect your ten, and then you must make two tricks.

J x

28

K Q x

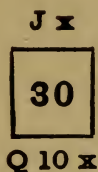
Play jack. The same as case 22.

J x

29

K 10 x

Play low, as jack is needed to protect the ten. If you should play the jack and the trick should run jack, queen, king, your ten might be led through later and caught.

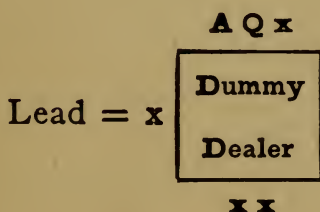


Play jack if you wish the lead in dummy. The same as cases 18 and 24.

Four Peculiar Cases of Second Hand Play

The following peculiar and important cases of second hand play come under no fixed rule, and therefore are not generally known. They are so constantly misplayed that you should study them with the care necessary for their fullest comprehension, and learn them absolutely.

1.



The number of small cards on either side is unimportant.

Play low usually. But play ace if you have the game in sight and if there is another suit to which the adversaries might change, in which you have no protection on either side. Play the queen only when trying for a grand slam.

2.

K J x

Lead = x



x x

With more than three in dummy play low; but with exactly three play the jack usually. You may win two tricks that way. But **play king** if you can make the game, or even the odd, if there is another whole suit against you to which they may change. If the king is taken you still protect the suit.

3.

Q x x

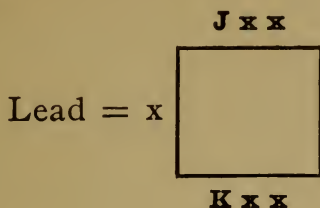
Lead = x



x x

With queen and two others in dummy and nothing in your hand, play queen on a low card led. Your one chance is that the leader is opening away from an A K suit. He certainly has not three honours or he would lead high. Therefore two honours must lie beyond the queen; and third hand can finesse and capture her.

4.



With three exactly in each hand, play the jack. It is your best chance for two tricks, and the only time you can lose is when leader has led from A 10, and queen lies to your right. If the jack wins, finesse always to lose to the left to avoid having your king led through.

Playing Second Hand from Dummy in a Declared Trump Hand

As so few players open away from an ace in a declared trump hand it is nearly certain that any opening except the ace marks that card in third hand, and you should play accordingly.

It is usually wise to play one of two cards in sequence unless you have a card of equal value in your own hand.

With the ace of the suit opened and no chance of winning another trick in that suit, it is wise to play the ace at once, fearing a short lead. There may occur cases where you wish to place the lead at your right, and therefore do not play the ace; but you must bear in mind

that there are many worse plays than ace at once when it is your only trick in that suit.

When an honour like a queen or a jack is led, you must remember, if you are tempted to cover, that the only benefit in covering lies in making something good later, in promoting some card in your hand or dummy's. If you have no high card which can be promoted there is no benefit in covering.

Dealer's Second Hand Play in No-Trump

Nearly the same rule applies to the dealer as to the dummy. You must usually play one of two cards in sequence unless you have a chance to win in dummy; you must cover a high card led if you can make some card good later in your own hand or in dummy's; and you often must chance a high card from a long suit to prevent the original leader from regaining the lead and bringing in his established suit.

But there are many situations so numerous and diverse that it is impossible to lay down arbitrary rules. You must be guided by the condition of the suit first opened, by the condition of your right hand adversary's suit if he has opened one, by the fall of the cards, and

by the state of the score, constantly calculating how many tricks you can afford to lose, how many chances you are entitled to take, and just when the critical moment has arrived for a desperate effort.

There is one thing you must observe carefully in a declared trump hand, namely, the number of times a suit will go around before you can trump it in one hand or the other. If you have K x in one hand and three small ones in the other, you can trump after the second round, and therefore there will be only two rounds of that suit so far as you are concerned, and you should play your king if the suit is led through. But also, if you have K x x or K x x x in your hand and two small ones in the dummy, the situation is the same. There will be only two rounds of the suit before you can trump it, and it probably will be your best chance to make one of those two tricks with your king, by playing it just as promptly as before on the first lead through.

Dealer's Second Hand Play in a Declared Trump Hand

The dealer's second hand plays in a declared trump hand are practically the same as dummy's.

Second Hand with Dummy on Your Left in No-Trump

As dummy is in view beyond you, your play is usually simple. Holding a high card barely guarded like a K x or Q x x, you must make it whenever you have the chance, but with K x x or Q x x x there is no need of such haste, and you can give your partner a chance.

It usually pays to play one of two high cards in sequence when only one card higher lies beyond you in dummy or when dummy is short in that suit. But it is foolish and dangerous to do so if two honours higher than your sequence are in dummy, or if he has a long suit with one high card in it and no other entry. In the latter case, the dealer may refuse to win your first sequence card with dummy's high card, and later lead through your remaining card, finesse against it, and make the whole suit.

In covering a face-card led remember you do so only to make some card good for yourself or your partner. If the entire suit lies in dummy, it is foolish to cover. The best rule is this: Cover when you hold two honours, or are short in the suit. When you hold two honours you should cover, as that will probably make a trick good for yourself; also when you are

short in the suit you should cover, as then there is a chance for your partner to have some card which may be promoted. But, as a rule, don't cover with only one honour in a long suit (four or more).

Second Hand with Dummy on Your Left in Declared Trump Hands

Here it is a question of making your good cards when you have the chance, being especially careful to play aces usually **at once**.

An ace should be held up only when the dealer leads a queen or a jack up to small cards in the dummy; here it is safe, as, if the dealer has the king, you will make your ace, and if your partner has it he will win the trick. Or it may be held up when the dealer is leading a low card or a ten up to a K J in the dummy, as he probably will finesse and your partner will make his queen.

You must cover face-cards led with even more freedom than in no-trump hands, to prevent possible finesses.

Second Hand with Dummy on Your Right in No-Trump

Many players are prone to play in one of two high cards in sequence second hand on a low

lead from dummy. With K Q x this is absurd, as you are sure of one trick by waiting, and you may make two tricks, while if you play in your queen and lose it, you surely can make but one. With Q J x it is wise to play the jack only, when at least one of the two higher cards lies in dummy. The single case when you should play the jack when dummy has no high card would be when dummy also has no card of re-entry by which he might gain the lead and come through your remaining high card for a finesse.

Cover face-cards led when holding short suits (three or fewer) or with long suits in which you can promote a trick for yourself.

Second Hand with Dummy on Your Right in Declared Trump Hands

With two cards in sequence like K Q x or Q J x play the lower of the sequence cards.

Aces should be played at once, as the leader may be leading from dummy up to a singleton king in his own hand and you should take no chances.

CHAPTER V

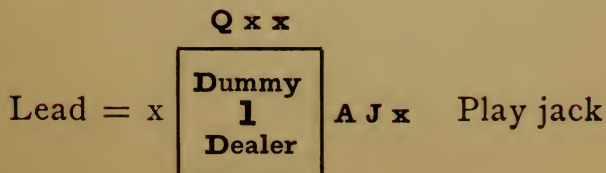
THIRD HAND PLAY

THE one great principle of third hand play is this: never finesse when there is no high card in dummy, but when playing to win the trick play your highest card. With two or more cards in sequence play the lowest of the sequence.

Third Hand in No-Trump

In no-trump when there is a card in dummy sufficiently guarded to become a trick if you do not finesse, instead of playing your best card, you must finesse some card like a jack or a ten; rarely also a nine.

Examples of Finesses in No-Trump Playing Third in Hand



Q x x
Lead = x

2

A 10 x Play 10

Q x x
Lead = x

3

K 10 x Play 10

J x x x
Lead = x

4

A 10 x Play 10

J x x x
Lead = x

5

K 10 x Play 10

J x x
Lead = x

6

K 10 x Play 10

The last case is a little unusual. The jack does not appear to be sufficiently guarded for a trick. Yet if you should play king and lose to the ace, the jack would later make. If your ten forces the ace, you have saved a trick; if it forces the queen, you have lost nothing, as the dealer must make one trick with jack on one side and queen on the other, while if your partner has both ace and queen, of course it makes no difference how you play.

Third Hand on a Strengthening Lead

On a strengthening lead from your partner, such as a nine or a ten, a jack when you can see the ten, or a queen when the jack is visible, you must play defensively and try to utilize his play to the best advantage. There is nothing to be gained by playing third hand high unless you wish to; you are not compelled to give him your best card, and you can frequently gain in position by letting his card force some high card from the dealer. Remember it is your suit you are playing for, not his.

Unblocking Third Hand in No-Trump

When not playing to win the trick, you must be careful never to be left with a high card

which may block your partner's suit, except in the one case where you have as many as he has, and want the lead at the end.

Rules for Unblocking in No-Trump Third Hand

1. With A x, K x, Q x play the higher card on any lead from your partner. With J x play jack only if the trick has already been won in dummy, or when trying to win it yourself. With any other two cards always play the lower.

2. With any three cards, two of which are honours, play the middle card the first time, saving the lowest to unblock with. With any other three cards play the lowest card first. The fall of this card is most important, as it usually lets your partner know definitely that you are short in that suit.

3. With four or five cards, always hold the lowest and play the others up in natural order, except in the instance when your highest card is a queen or a jack, in which case you still hold your lowest, but signal with the next two cards above it.

Examples of Various Third Hand Plays in No-Trump When Not Playing to Win the Trick

HOLDING	PLAY
10 3	3
Q 10 4	10
J 7 3	3
8 4 2	2
9 8 4 2	4-8-9-2
Q 8 5 2	8-5
Q 7 6 4 3	6-4

Third Hand in Declared Trump Hands

In trying to win the trick play your highest card unless there are other cards in sequence to it, in which case you play the lowest of the sequence. But when holding A J of the suit your partner leads, you can finesse the jack when king or queen lies guarded in the dummy. To finesse in a declared trump hand so low as the ten is dangerous and rarely successful.

Showing Down

With two cards, neither being an honour, you may play the higher first and then the lower to signal to your partner that you wish to ruff the third round. But remember this is not a

compulsory play. Your object in making it is **not** to tell your partner you have only two of the suit; such information is purely secondary. What you should tell him is this: "I prefer that you should continue the third round of this suit rather than change to any other." Therefore, in the following cases you do not show down:

1. When void of trumps.
2. Holding in trumps ace, or ace and king alone, when you do not care to be forced.
3. Holding four trumps, when you usually do not care for a ruff.
4. Holding in trumps K x or Q J x, when you probably do not gain anything by the force, and when there is some other suit, like K J x or K x x, in the dummy, which you want your partner to lead through rather than to ruff you and make you lead some suit up to dummy disadvantageously. Also, there is the other side of such a play to consider. If you are the leader and are playing a suit in which your partner does not show down and yet proves later to have no more, you should try to determine which of the above four reasons he had for not showing down.

Since to play a higher card and then a lower shows your partner that you can win the third round of that suit, there is a chance to make

the same play when he opens with an A K suit and you hold Q x x. You can play high-low and announce that you can win the third round with the queen. But as this round is usually trumped, this is a good play in one case only; when dummy is the strong trump hand, and has only two cards of your partner's suit, and also has no other suit which you wish your partner to lead through: then it is wise to show down and invite your partner to continue, and force the dummy hand.

Encouragement and Discouragement Cards

As there is so seldom any chance for your partner to establish and bring in his suit against the dealer in a declared trump hand, it is rarely necessary to unblock in your initial play, as with a no-trump hand. In fact, you can use your cards to a much better advantage by playing a small one, a 2, 3, 4, or 5, to inform your partner that he must expect no help from you in that suit, that you can aid him neither with a taking card nor by trumping; such cards, therefore, being distinctly **discouragement** cards. On the other hand cards like the 6, 7, 8, or 9 should be reserved for **encouragement** cards, and should mean, as they usually do, that you prefer your partner to continue that suit.

Examples of Encouragement and Discouragement Cards

Partner leads an ace. You hold K 8 4 2. Play the 8 if you wish him to continue the suit. Or he leads an ace and you hold 10 8 7 2. Play the 2 to drive him to some other suit.

Or he leads a king and you hold Q 9 6 2. Play 9 if after seeing dummy you wish him to continue, the 2 if you wish him to change.

Or partner leads a queen which dummy wins with the ace. You hold K 8 6 3. Play the 8 at once.

Remarks on Encouragement and Discouragement Cards

Of course sometimes your cards will be such as not to convey accurate information. In these cases, however, you and your partner are no worse off than every one has always been hitherto before such plays were practised. Usually you will find you can guide your partner correctly, you can urge him to continue, you can force him to change. When he is guessing your suit you can reassure him with a high card, rarely at any cost, or repel him with a low one.

Such play of small cards in a declared trump

hand is in line with signalling in no-trump to show an honour, and is also correlative with a reverse discard to show strength. In short, in all parts of the game an unnecessarily high card followed by a lower one is a telegraphic signal, meaning "Come on." An encouragement card, a 6 or higher, conveys this same information by itself. It is either intentional to attract notice, or compulsory, owing to the shortness of the suit. In either case its message is alike clear and unmistakable.

In no other respect has the game of Bridge progressed further or developed more naturally than in the use, by experienced players, of these cards of encouragement and discouragement.

CHAPTER VI

DUMMY PLAY IN NO-TRUMP

Choice of Suit

UPON gaining the lead you must make a rapid inventory of all the resources you and dummy together have; you must estimate roughly the value of the hand to determine whether to play for the game, for the odd, or to save the game; you must calculate how many tricks you can probably take, how many you can afford to let the adversaries have; and you must decide which suit to play for, which can be the most easily cleared, and which will net you the greatest number of tricks.

As a rule it is useless to play for any suit in which you hold in both hands fewer than seven cards. You might hold six or even five cards of a suit, all high and all in one hand, in which case you could lead them off or clear the suit; but this is rare.

You should usually play for that suit in which you hold the most cards in both hands. Of two suits equal in length it is better to choose that one which has the most in one hand. An

eight-card suit that lies five in one hand and three in the other is better than one which has four in each hand.

Of two suits otherwise equally balanced it is better to play for that one which can be the more easily established. If one of them is so composed that you will probably have to take a finesse to clear it, such as K 10 x on one side and A J x x x on the other, and the remaining suit is all cleared except the ace, such as K x x on one side and Q J 10 x x on the other, the latter is the better one to play for, as the ace must always make and you accomplish much in clearing four tricks at once. If you try for the first suit and your finesse loses you have not cleared so many tricks and the other ace is still against you.

The Division of Cards

In playing for your longest suit a good principle to apply is this: when the cards can so lie as to be evenly distributed, you should play for them to be so.

With seven cards in both hands the opponents hold six; it is possible for them to fall in three rounds, leaving you with a thirteener.

With eight cards in your hand and dummy's,

the remaining five will more often than not lie three and two.

With nine cards of a suit the other four are found so constantly to lie two and two that it is an axiom of good Bridge not to finesse with nine, including ace and king, but to play for the cards to fall evenly. With ace and queen on one side, however, and the king lacking, it is proper to finesse with nine and even ten cards, but not with eleven, as again the remaining cards may fall.

Finesse

In playing for your long suit it is usually right to finesse against one card, but only in rare cases against two cards, unless the score demands it or unless you are preparing for a second finesse.

Examples of Finesse

In these examples your hand and dummy's may be reversed, and the number of small cards is unimportant.

1. You hold x x, dummy has A Q x. Lead low up to the queen and finesse it.

2. You hold J 10 x, dummy has A Q x. Lead jack and finesse it.

3. You hold x x, dummy has A J x. If forced to play this suit, lead up to the jack and finesse it. It may win if second hand has both king and queen and plays low.

4. You hold 10 x, dummy has A J x. Lead 10 and finesse it if you can enter in your own hand to lead it again. But if you are already in dummy and have but one entry in your hand, it is better to lead low from the ace hand and trust to forcing out a high card second hand; then use your one entry later to make the now legitimate finesse.

5. You hold Q x, dummy has A x x. Lead low from the ace hand up to your queen. Your one chance is to find the king second hand, in which case you will make both your high cards. It is useless to lead the queen up to the ace, as if it is covered, or if you finesse it and it loses, you can make but one trick in that suit. So too it is useless to lead a jack up to an A Q suit unless you also hold the 10. Your best chance to make three tricks in the suit is to lead low and finesse the queen, hoping to catch the king once guarded on your left.

6. You hold J x x, dummy has A x x x or K x x x. You gain nothing by leading the jack. Rather lead low from the ace or king up to the

jack and trust to forcing some high card second hand.

The general principle of finesse is this: do not lead any high card to finesse it unless you hold its equal on one side or the other.

When to Finesse

The greatest considerations in making a finesse are these: what will be the result if you lose? what will the adversary do? and can you afford to take the risk of failure and subsequent loss? Many players are so dazzled by the prospect of the glorious profits a dangerous finesse holds out that they fail to estimate the results of failure. When a finesse is not necessary to the game, when you can make the one trick or the tricks you need without finessing, it is absurd to take chances. Only after you have secured the game are you right in finessing for extra tricks or for a slam. When your finesse promises to lose more tricks than it can gain it is silly to make it unless the game also lies in the balance.

Finessing to Throw the Lead

Suits containing A Q, or A J, or K J can be finessed only one way. But many times you will have A J on one side and K 10 on the

other. In such a case it is just as well to wait if possible until some discards will indicate which way you should try your finesse. But most important of all is this. Sometimes you can afford to let one adversary win, because he can lead nothing to your disadvantage, while the other one might lead through some high card and ruin your hand. In these cases you do not finesse with the expectation of winning, but realising that a finesse is necessary you take your chance to lose, if lose you must, to the hand which cannot harm you.

As an example of the above principle imagine a suit opened up to you in which you have K Q x, with nothing in the dummy. You win with the king, and it is at once evident that if your right-hand adversary gets in to lead through your Q x you must lose the rest of that suit; your apparent protection has vanished. But if you can force your **left-hand** adversary into the lead, and make him lead up to your hand, you are guarded against him and are in a safe position. Therefore you should aim to lose any trick, if necessary, to him and not to your right. Once realising this principle you can finesse as low as you please. For example:

H	5
C	A J 6 4 2
S	K Q 6

Lead = a low heart

Dummy
Dealer

H	K Q 4
C	K 9 5
S	A 7 3

Winning with the king of hearts, you should cross over to the king of spades and lead a low club. Once past the dangerous second hand you can finesse the 9 of clubs. You must lose a trick in the suit probably, and you must take no chance of losing it on your right.

You will find your game greatly strengthened if you will be content with hoping your finesses will win, but **expecting** them to lose and being prepared for the consequent loss.

Holding up Aces

The solitary reason for not playing the ace of the adversary's suit at once upon his lead is to exhaust the partner's hand so that he will be unable to return it if he later secures the lead.

It must be remembered constantly that this common and valuable play is directed **not** at the leader, but at his partner. When this is realised the deduction of certain rules follows as a matter of course.

When not to Hold up an Ace

You can play the ace at once in the following cases:

1. When you can take a subsequent trick in that suit.
2. When third hand fails on the first round.
3. When there is only one finesse upon which the whole hand depends, and that perforce must be taken to lose to the original leader.
4. When you can go game and there is another suit in which you have no protection on either side.
5. When you can go game and there is another suit in which you have only doubtful protection like K x or Q x x.
6. When you and dummy together have seven or more of the suit, the adversary has opened, and you have an ace in another suit, short in both hands, which you cannot afford to lose before your own suit is established. For example:

H	A 6 4
D	A
C	A 6 3
S	K Q J 7 5 3

Lead = a low club

Dummy
Dealer

H	K J 7 2
D	4 2
C	9 8 7 4
S	10 6 2

Here you can play the ace of clubs at once. If the leader has the ace of spades he must make his club suit, no matter what you do. If your right-hand adversary has it, he is likely to have no more clubs to return. If he has one, then the leader opened a four-card suit which you need not fear. Should you hold up the ace, on the other hand, the adversary might change and take out your ace of diamonds, and there are ten cards of that suit against you, with probably a long suit on your right.

When to Hold up an Ace

When none of the above six cases occurs, you should hold up your ace; the points to consider being that you cannot go game, and can never take another trick in that suit. Having decided

to hold up your ace, the number of tricks you must pass will be determined by the sum of the cards you and dummy both hold in that suit. Assuming that the leader has opened a five-card suit, if you and dummy together have five, the partner will have three; if you and dummy have six, he can have only two; if you have seven, he can have but one. Therefore it is a great help in playing to remember that with five cards in both hands of the adversary's suit you should wait until the third round, with six you can win the second round. If the partner after gaining the lead still has a card to return, the leader must have opened a four-card suit, and such suits are rarely dangerous.

The Entry

The value of clearing or establishing your long suit so that the small cards will be good for tricks is naturally dependent on your having some card of entry with which you can gain the lead and reap the result. Some cards of entry are obvious, such as an ace, or a K Q sequence, or a Q J 10 sequence. But there are many other ways of gaining the lead in the hand which has the cleared suit. The most important ones are here given.

An Entry in the Adversary's Suit

If the adversary opens a suit in which you hold the ace in one hand and the king in the other you naturally must save the high card in the hand which later will need it for an entry, and win with the other card.

	D	K 7
	C	K Q J 7 5 3
Lead=low diamond	Dummy Dealer	
	D	A 6 2
	C	9

Here you must win with the ace, as the king is the only entry for your long club suit.

	D	K Q 4
	C	Q J 10 6 5 2
Lead=low diamond	2	
	D	A 10 3
	C	A

Here you must win with the ace, even if the 10 would take, as you must have two entries and

must therefore have two small cards to lead over.

D | Q 7 5
C | K Q J 6 5 4 2

Lead=low diamond

3

D | A 10 4
C | 3

Here you must win with the ace, even if the 10 would take. as you need two **small** cards to lead across.

D | K J 4
C | Q J 10 7 6 5

Lead=low diamond

4

D | A 9 6
C | K

Here you must win with the ace, even if the 9 would win. Should the adversary hold up the ace of clubs when you lead the king, you would need two entries for the diamond suit.

D | 10 8 5
C | K Q J 7 6 4

Lead=low diamond

5

D | A K J 9 3
C | 2

You must win with your jack, even if the 9 could win, as again, after clearing the clubs, you must have two cards smaller than the 10 to lead across in order to enter. If you win with the 9 and lead the jack to force the queen, the leader will hold off and you will have no chance to use your 10 as an entry.

D		J 6 3
C		K Q J 4 3 2

Lead=low diamond

6

D		Q 7 2
C		8

The first trick is won third in hand with the ace. You must play your queen upon it, reserving the two small ones to lead through the leader's king up to your jack. Your queen is valueless, as you can take only one trick in the suit anyway, and it is necessary to win that one in the dummy.

D		A 6 4
C		7

Lead=low diamond

7

D		Q J 2
C		K Q J 6 4 3

This is a similar position except that dummy is supposed to have declared no-trump, and you now need the entry in your own hand. Instead of passing the first trick and winning with the jack you should play your ace at once, and then you must enter on either queen or jack. This situation is delusive. But a moment's thought will show you you cannot catch the king nor can you possibly make more than two tricks in the suit no matter how you play.

**Entering on a Small Card of a Suit in Which
You Have Eight or More in Both Hands**

7 6 4 2



A K Q 5

Three rounds will probably exhaust the adversaries' five cards and make dummy's 7 an entry. Two rounds of the suit will show you whether this plan will succeed.

8 5 3 2



A K 7 4

Two rounds of the suit with the A K, and a third round which you will lose, will leave the 8 as an entry unless some one else had four.

Q 6 5 2



A K 7 3

Here you have one sure entry in the queen, but by leading the 7 first over to the queen and holding the 3, you may and probably will have a second entry in the 6, after the ace and king have been played.

5 4 2



A K 8 7 6 3

If the remaining four cards are evenly divided and fall on the first two rounds, your 5 is a perfect entry.

In all these cases it is unwise to depend upon such a card being an entry. An uneven distribution of the cards may thwart your scheme. If the success of the hand depends upon your

having such an entry, you must test your entry first, and if it fails try some other plan.

Building up an Entry

This you should do before disclosing your suit, else the adversaries may hold off and upset your scheme. If you begin to build up your entry early in the hand before they are sure what you are working for, you are more likely to succeed.

H	K Q 6
D	K Q 8 6
C	A K
S	A 6 4 2

Lead = low spade



H	J 5 3
D	7 3
C	Q J 7 6 4 2
S	Q 5

A low spade is led and you win with the queen. If you play off A K clubs and then lead K Q of hearts to make your jack an entry, the adversaries will certainly not play the ace of hearts. But if you keep the club suit concealed and play off the hearts first, you may tempt them to play the ace and continue their own

suit, oblivious of the fact that you must have had a reason for playing for such a short suit in dummy.

Taking a Chance for an Entry

Many times in the hand that needs an entry there will be a card which, while not a winning card, could win and become an entry if a certain higher card lies on its right. If dummy holds K x and you lead up to the king, it must win when the ace lies in second hand. Similar cases would be if you hold A x x and lead up to dummy's Q x, or if you hold A K x x and lead up to dummy's J x.

This is a legitimate chance and one that often must be taken when an entry is needed in the hand holding the established suit.

Losing the First Trick to Enter Later

Sometimes the hand which has the long suit will have no other possible entry; the long suit will have winning cards in it, but it will not be good enough to make entirely without losing a trick in order to clear it. In such a case the point is to lose the first trick while the other and stronger hand still has a small card to lead across. Lose the trick that must be lost **at once**. For example:

S | A K x x x x

Dummy
Dealer

S | x x

You can see that with five cards against you some one must have three and will stop the suit on the third round. Your only escape is this. You must lose one trick, therefore lose it at once; in other words, lose your **third** trick **first**. Play a low card and pass it. With a second one to lead over to your ace and king you will win the rest of the suit unless there were four in one hand.

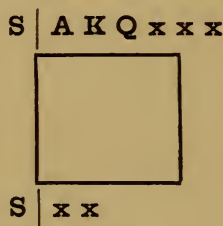
S | A K x x x x x

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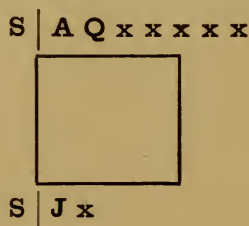
S | x x

Even with nine in the suit, bearing in mind the doctrine that the others are likely to be divided and fall, it is better to play low on the first trick, and provide against an unequal division of the cards. By so doing you may possibly lose an unnecessary trick, but if you play

for the suit to fall and it doesn't, you will have lost four tricks for the sake of saving one. The gain is disproportionate to the loss.



Even with A K Q and a suit of eight cards it is wiser to lose the first trick and be sure of five than to risk catching them all and, not doing so, take only three. Of course if all six tricks are needed for the game you must take the chance and play for the suit to fall.



Here is a similar case. If you lead the jack and second hand plays the king, you should pass it, being thereby practically sure of the rest of the suit.

CHAPTER VII

DUMMY PLAY IN DECLARED TRUMP HANDS

Most of the rules governing finesse and the division of cards are just as applicable in declared trump hands as in no-trump.

The best way to judge the value of a declared trump hand is to calculate, as soon as the dummy is displayed, **not how many tricks you think you can make, but how many you see that you must lose.** There are usually some certain losses that no method of play can avoid. Add to these the possible losses occurring through finesses going wrong, or through not making cards apparently guarded, or through suits being badly divided, and you will find that you not only arrive at a fair estimate of the hand, but you will also be able to determine whether safe, conservative play will win you enough tricks to secure the game, or whether you must make some extra effort not otherwise justifiable to gain more tricks than are apparent.

Examples of Estimating Hands

H	J 6 2
D	A 7 3
C	9 6 5 3
S	A Q 2



H	A K Q 7 3
D	K 6 4
C	8 7 2
S	6 5

Score 8. Original heart declared. Here it is evident that you must lose apparently no trump tricks, one diamond, three clubs and no spades if the finesse goes; a total of four tricks. Your one responsibility in this hand is to try the finesse on which will depend the game.

H	8 3
D	A K 7
C	8 6 4 2
S	A 5 3 2



H	A K Q 7 5 4
D	6 4 3
C	7 5
S	K 6

Score 0. Original heart declared. Here you must lose one diamond, two clubs and no spades, as after two rounds you can trump the rest. Therefore if the trumps are divided, you will lose only three tricks and must win the game.

H	4 3 2
D	9 2
C	A 7 6 5 3
S	9 7 6



H	A K 8 7 6 5
D	K 4
C	4 2
S	A K 4

Score 0. Original heart. Here you must lose one diamond, one club and one spade. To go game you must find the ace of diamonds on your right and the trumps must all fall in two rounds. Therefore when forced to play the ace of clubs, lead the diamonds up to your king, as that is your only chance.

H	10 4
D	8 6 5 3
C	J 7 6 4
S	A Q 10



H	K Q J 9 7 3
D	A K
C	5 3
S	6 5 3

Score 0. Original heart. Here you must lose one trump trick, nothing in diamonds, two tricks in clubs, and in order to go game **no tricks** in spades. Therefore you must finesse not only the queen but the 10, your one chance being that both king and jack are on your left.

By estimating your suits in such a way you will find that many a hand is very simple; that either no great effort is needed, or that your attention must be centred on one thing alone, the result of which will decide the game. Even when you have no apparent way of winning and the game seems impossible to attain, there remains one chance; fortunately the possibility of the adversary's making an error is ever present, and many hands inherently too weak for

the game ride to victory on the adversary's bad play. Also many a successful play of which its maker was unduly proud came about through ignorance or stupidity of the other side, through an ill-timed attack or a miserable defence.

Rules for the Play of Declared Trump Hands

In every hand wherein you and dummy have the majority of the trumps it is usually wise to lead and exhaust those of the adversaries. But the profits accruing from this play depend upon your having other high cards to make later, or some long suit which you can bring in after the adversaries' power to interrupt it has been destroyed.

Therefore you do not lead trumps in the three following cases :

1. When the weak trump hand can trump some long suit which the strong trump hand has, either at once or in a short time.

2. When you have not the ace of trumps and the adversaries must therefore win a trump trick, there being at the same time some weak suit to which they would be likely to change, which, however, you can discard on high cards in the other hand if you play those first.

3. When the weak trump hand has some long suit to establish and needs to enter on one round or on several rounds of trumps to clear and make it.

Examples of the Play in Declared Trump Hands

H	7 6 5
C	3
Dummy Dealer	
H	A K Q 8 4
C	A 8 6 5 4

Hearts are trumps. Here the weak trump hand can trump the long club suit, so that trumps should not be led until dummy has made his three.

H	A K Q
C	4
H	J 10 9 6 4 2
C	A K 9 8 3

Hearts are trumps. Here again dummy, although apparently strong, is really the weak hand and must use his trumps on the three losing diamonds.

H	K Q J 7 4 2
D	7 5 4
C	3
S	A 6 4



H	10 5 3
D	6 3 2
C	A K Q
S	K 8 5 2

Hearts are trumps. Here you have not the ace of trumps and are weak in diamonds. If you lead trumps the adversaries will change to the diamond suit, and by making one trick in trumps and three in diamonds will prevent your going game. But if you lead clubs at once before the trumps and discard two of dummy's diamonds, you must win the game.

H	9 5
D	8 6 4 3
C	A K Q J
S	A 3 2



H	K Q 10 7 4 3
D	9 7 5 2
C	4
S	K 6

Hearts are trumps. Here you confront the loss of two tricks probably in trumps and three or four more in diamonds. But if you lead clubs at once and throw off the diamonds you may lose only the two trump tricks and one in diamonds and go game. Some players fear to lead the plain suit first, having had the idea of leading trumps at once so ground into their minds, but this scheme of play cannot fail. Even if an adversary trump one of your clubs you lose nothing, as you discard a surely losing diamond; it is simply an exchange of tricks with every chance for gain in your favour.

Entering on the Last Round of Trumps

Often you can win one round of trumps in the hand that has the long suit. If you see that that long suit is cleared first, and then win the

last round of trumps in that hand, you have used your trump for an entry. For example:

H		Q 6 4
S		A Q J 6 3
H		A K 10 7 2
S		K

By winning the first two rounds of trumps in your hand, then playing the king of spades, and then finishing the trumps in the dummy you have entered and can probably make the suit. You certainly have avoided the risk of overtaking the king of spades.

H		5 4 2
C		A K Q J 3 2
H		A K Q 7 6 3
C		—

This is a somewhat different case. If the trumps are divided two and two they will all

fall, and your 5 will be left in the dummy as an entry for the club suit. The catch in such a position is this: the dealer often is forced at the start and carelessly trumps with his 3 of hearts before he has fully considered his plan of action. When the 3 has been played the hand is ruined. It is a good habit to acquire, that of saving your smallest trump in your strong trump hand; many an emergency appears when such a provision saves the day.

The most complicated case occurs when the hand, the dummy for example, which is weak in trumps still has some few high ones with which he can always take tricks, as you hold the other high ones in your hand, and also has a long suit which needs to be established by being led and ruffed in your hand. In this case, if you take out the trumps first you lose the entries necessary for the continuation and establishing of dummy's suit. Therefore if it looks feasible to establish such a suit in dummy you must ruff it in your hand, enter in dummy's hand on a trump lead, lead his suit and ruff it again, enter on another trump lead, and so continue your play that as his suit finally clears you will enter in his hand on the last necessary round of trumps, and bring in his good cards. For example:

H	A K Q
C	A K 6 5 3 2



H	J 10 7 6 4 2
C	7 4

Here take two rounds of trumps; then lead A K clubs, ruff a third club with 10 of trumps, and enter on the last round of trumps to make the remaining clubs which are probably cleared.

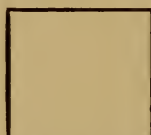
H	Q J 9
C	Q J 10 8 6 4



H	A K 10 7 5
C	A

Play ace of clubs first. Then enter on 9 of hearts and lead a club, trumping it with the king of hearts. If the king of clubs has not fallen, lead across to jack of hearts and trump another club with the ace of hearts. If the clubs are now cleared, as they probably will be, you can enter on the queen of hearts and make the suit.

H		J 10 6
C		A 8 7 5 4 3 2



H		A K Q 5 3
C		K

Play king of clubs first and then take the first round of trumps, winning in dummy with the 10. Lead a low club next and trump it with the queen of hearts. It is not necessary to lead the ace of clubs before the low club, as you must trump one round and would better trump this one. If seven clubs have now fallen the other one must drop on the ace, and so you can now finish the trumps, winning one round on your own hand with the king and taking the last round with dummy's jack, which is now the entry for the remaining clubs.

Of course you may find the cards so unevenly distributed that the suit will not clear or you cannot exhaust the trumps. But in such cases probably no other plan will succeed any better, and the possibility of using this scheme must always be in mind. It must be so familiar that

you can see at once the kind of hand adapted to its use and wherein it may succeed.

This method of play daunts some players of fair ability, because it necessitates ruffing in the strong trump hand, something they have learned to avoid. But it is one of the few cases wherein you can afford such apparent extravagance, as the ultimate gain repays you.

Double Ruff

The only value in a double ruff lies in making the trumps in the **weak** trump hand. You trump with the strong trump hand only to regain the lead, so as again to force the weak hand. If you could enter again in your strong trump hand on an A K suit it would certainly be better than weakening it with a force. Therefore, if you bear in mind that your gain consists in the trumps you make out of the weak hand, you must realise that the instant you have made all those the motive for your play is gone. The careless player exhilarated by the success of his devastating cross-ruff continues it once too often; from habit he forces his strong hand after the weak hand's trumps are all made and thereby often loses a chance to establish some card or make some finesse.

H	6 4 2
D	8 6 5 3
C	4
S	A 7 6 5 3



H	A K Q 10 7 5
D	A Q
C	A 9 6 3
S	2

Hearts are trumps. You must trump clubs in the dummy and spades in your hand, but after trumping a club with dummy's last trump, don't force your strong hand with another spade, but lead up to the diamond finesse; otherwise you will have to lead diamonds from the wrong side.

In all cross-ruffs you must look out for this also. You may be trumping with such high trumps that the adversaries cannot overtrump you, yet they may be getting discards and preparing to trump some other suit. Therefore, when playing your cross-ruff you must watch to see if you have not an ace or an ace and a king, which you should make first before they have a chance to discard that suit and later trump your winning cards, thus regaining all the advantage you are apparently reaping.

Leading for the Last Trump

It seldom pays to exhaust the last trump when it is higher than any you have. Sometimes, however, it occurs that you have some established suit on one side, and just one card on the other to lead over to enter with. In this case if you do not draw the adversary's last trump, and the established suit is ruffed when you begin to play it, you can never enter to make the rest of it. In such a case with two or more trumps yourself, or being able to win whatever is led, you must draw the last trump. For example:

H	7 6 5
D	8 6
C	7 4 2
S	A K Q J 3



H	A K Q 10 4
D	A 9 3 2
C	K Q 5
S	2

Hearts declared trumps. Ace of clubs is led, and then a low one which you win. After three rounds of trumps the jack still remains against you. As you can enter on every suit you must draw the jack and will then make five odd.

Doubling up the Trumps

Sometimes it happens that you are left with two trumps, but not the highest, and the adversaries also have two, but you cannot tell whether they are in one hand or divided. It is a most dangerous play to lead again and chance finding them divided, hoping they will both fall. If they do fall you will save only one trick, but if you find them in one hand and they have some established suit, you will lose heavily. Instead of leading trumps you must lead your established suit, or some winning card to force them and deliberately let them make **both** trumps. By forcing them first you will be left with the long trump and can surely make your other good cards.

If you have **three** trumps left you usually can take the chance of doubling up the two that lie against you.

CHAPTER VIII

SIDE PLAY

Side Play in No-Trump Hands

ALMOST all players seem to think that the greater part of the game of Bridge lies in the play of the dummy hand. During the other three deals they lose their interest, sit in a state of apathy, and even impatiently await their own deal. But this is a false estimate of the game. The play of the side hands against the dealer is fully as important as the dummy play, often far more so. The responsibilities are enormous. There is no other part of the game where the superiority of a truly great player is so marked. You must be on the alert every instant to defeat a tentative advance on the dealer's part, to oppose an impregnable defence, or even to attack boldly and brilliantly yourself whenever a weak spot is disclosed ; watching dummy, calculating your partner's hand, deducing the dealer's scheme from his play and his discards, taking advantage of every point in the shifting scene of the game, and above all counting, counting, counting with the score ever in your mind.

Your side play does not consist in your partner's opening some suit which you win and return, feeling that your immediate duty has been discharged. You cannot commit yourself to one plan of action, and nailing your colors to the mast sail forth to victory or defeat. You must be alive to the necessity of changing your entire play at a moment's notice. What was the best thing to do an instant ago may have become the worst; the suit you have determined never to open may in a minute be the only one you can open. There are no positive values; everything is relative, secondary and dependent.

Considerations Governing the Leader's Play After Seeing Dummy

Your opening lead, which has been explained, is more or less a plunge in the dark. But the moment dummy is displayed and you have seen the result of the first trick, your responsibilities begin. If you are the original leader, every time you gain the lead after your initial opening you must decide upon your next play **only** after carefully considering four things:

1. Whether you should continue the suit you first opened.
2. Whether through a lead or through dis-

cards you have had any information from your partner upon which you should act.

3. Whether dummy displays some weak point to which it may pay to shift.

4. Or whether the dealer has started some scheme which it is necessary to thwart at any expense, abandoning all else.

Analysis of the Above Four Considerations

1. Whether you should continue the suit you first opened.

Here you must be guided by the strength or the weakness that dummy discloses in that suit; also by the card your partner played and the information that it conveyed; and, in case the dealer won the trick, by the value of the card he played with, the chance of its being a false card. If your suit lies heavily against you in dummy, if your partner's card implied little or no aid, or if the dealer won the trick cheaply, you should change suits.

2. Whether through a lead or through discards you have had any information from your partner upon which you should act.

If your own suit is not established, and your partner has failed to return it, but has led another, it must be either for the reason that he has no more of yours or because he prefers his

own. In either case unless your hand is very strong, it is better to return his lead. Or again your suit is not established and he has asked for some certain suit, by a reverse discard in it, or by discarding from the other suits. Again you would better lead for his suit.

3. Whether dummy displays some weak point to which it may pay to shift.

When you do not care to continue your own suit, when your partner has shown nothing, you are forced to turn to dummy for hint or suggestion. In such cases it is not a bad play to change to that suit in which dummy and you together have the fewest cards. This is more likely to be your partner's suit than any other.

4. Whether the dealer has started some scheme which it is necessary to thwart at any expense, abandoning all else.

This case, usually well marked, is often overlooked. Either the leader never sees the situation at all and goes stolidly on with his own suit just because he began it, or he appreciates the peril but either is ignorant of how to overcome it, or hesitates to employ a play so radical. The one common, almost universal case is where dummy has some long suit nearly established, and one solitary entry to make it with.

If that entry can be taken out before the suit is established, the suit will never make, and the game will be saved. Therefore your own suit must be abandoned and you must lead to take out dummy's entry, and usually your highest card. For example, dummy's suit is nearly established and his entry is an ace which he has once guarded. You hold in his ace suit king and two small. You should lead your king because either dummy must win your king and lose his ace prematurely, or you will win the trick and force his ace just as surely on your next low lead. Sometimes such plays may cost a trick, but they often save huge losses.

Considerations Governing the Play of Third Hand

The responsibilities of the original leader's partner, commonly called third hand, are nearly the same as the original leader's. In this position you must also consider four things:

1. Whether you should return your partner's lead.
2. Whether your suit is better and can be established and brought in more easily.
3. Whether dummy has some weak spot which invites an attack.

4. Or whether the dealer's scheme should be overthrown and some card of entry extracted.

Analysis of the Above Four Considerations

1. Whether you should return your partner's lead.

You usually should return your partner's lead unless you have what you consider is a better and more easily established suit, or unless his suit is **twice** established against him in dummy. If there is only one winning card against him in dummy it usually pays to lead and take it out.

2. Whether your own suit is better and can be established and brought in more easily.

This is often a most delicate point to decide. If your partner has opened with a small card and no very positive development has occurred, and if you have a good long suit which you can open with an honour, also having some entry to make it with, you should probably change, especially if dummy is weak in your suit.

If dummy holds a jack or a ten in your suit, you must lead a higher card if possible to force the dealer to win or perhaps to catch some high card he may have. For example:

J 4

Dummy	A Q 10 6 3
Dealer	

Third hand should lead the queen

J 6 3

Dummy	A Q 10 5 2
Dealer	

Third hand should lead the queen

10 4 2

Dummy	A J 9 7 3
Dealer	

Third hand should lead the jack

3. Whether dummy has some weak spot which invites an attack.

When you are third hand, it is usually disastrous to change to dummy's weak suit unless you yourself are strong in it, or unless your partner has opened from weakness. If your partner has led his strong suit, and if you and dummy are both weak in another suit, that is probably the dealer's stronghold. It is the exact reverse of the dealer's choice (which is sound) of the suit in which he and dummy are weakest and shortest. For example:

H	A K Q 4		
D	A Q 7 6 2		
C	A J 5 4		
S	None		

Lead=low diamond	Dummy Dealer	H	8 6 2
		D	J 8 3
		C	K Q 7 6 2
		S	J 4

Passed no-trump. Third hand wins with jack of diamonds. For him to change to jack of spades would be madness; it must be the dealer's suit. He might just as well lead a diamond back to his partner or even a heart. The dealer may have a superb suit of spades and with none in dummy may never be able to enter and make them.

4. Whether the dealer's scheme should be overthrown and some card of entry extracted.

This position is exactly similar to case 4 under the leader's side play (page 110).

Holding up Winning Cards

The play of holding up an ace to block the adversary's suit is just as incumbent upon the side players as upon the dealer. But it is an equally good play to hold up a twice-guarded king, safely intrenched behind the ace, and

refuse to win the first trick, thus encouraging the dealer to think his finesse is succeeding, and luring him into a fatal ambushade.

Side Play in Declared Trump Hands

After the opening lead you and your partner have the choice of several plays of constant recurrence. These must be studied and learned so that they can be instantly recognised.

1. Leading through dummy's strength.
2. Leading up to dummy's weakness.
3. Forcing the strong trump hand.
4. Not allowing the weak trump hand to ruff.

Analysis of the Above Four Common Plays in Declared Trump Hands

1. Leading through dummy's strength.

This occurs when dummy is on your left. Remember you are not to lead through dummy's strength because it is strength. Your play to be of value must be such that it will enable your partner to catch high cards which dummy has or to make cards which he could not otherwise make were he to lead the suit himself. Therefore there is no benefit in leading through a suit in dummy like A K Q or K Q J, as such a lead cannot possibly aid your partner. But

suits that present vulnerable gaps, like tenace suits, or a guarded king or queen, or ace and small ones—to lead through all these may help your partner. The test of a suit is this: if it is a suit which you wouldn't care to lead if you held it in your own hand it is usually a good suit for you to lead when it lies in dummy. It is rarely a good plan to lead through weakness, yet if there remains a weak suit unopened late in the hand it may be the best thing to try.

2. Leading up to dummy's weakness.

When dummy lies on your right you should lead up to his weakest suit, but not necessarily his **shortest**, if he is the weak trump hand, as that would result in his ruffing it later, something to be avoided. Any suit containing no card higher than a jack is considered weak. You must lead up to dummy's weakness absolutely regardless of what you hold in such a suit. Any suit which you would not dream of opening originally becomes good to lead if it is up to dummy's weakness. A Q suits, K J suits, K x, Q x x, A x x, x x x x, all are good leads when you open them up to a weak hand. The best way to do is to select dummy's weakness **first** and then open that suit; not look in your own hand and set some suit aside and **then** hunt in dummy for a second suggestion. An A Q suit is of no value unless the king lies

on your right. If the dealer has the king on your left, you can never catch it, and if your partner has it, there is all the more reason for you to lead it. You may lose your king if you open from K x, but if A Q lies on your left you probably will lose it anyway, and so there is no harm done.

Ace and low ones in dummy is really weakness to lead up to. It is almost like a low suit without the ace. The ace must make and your partner may force it with a small card, and later make other tricks in that suit.

3. Forcing the strong trump hand.

Some players are averse to leading their high cards when the adversary is going to ruff them, but every good Whist player realises fully the advantage of forcing the strong hand. If the dealer's strong trump hand has only five trumps, and you can force one out at the start, it makes it all the more difficult for him to exhaust the trumps preparatory to making his long suit or other good cards. Every trump he loses weakens his hand that much the more. Many a proud six-trump hand has crumbled to pieces by being forced once and then, after one trump lead, being forced again, with the result that of the six trumps played the strong hand has contributed three.

Care must be taken, however, in forcing a

hand that is very strong or has all the high trumps. In such a case, after the force, the dealer may exhaust the trumps and make some long suit in the other hand, upon which he will make numerous advantageous discards from some suit to which you should have changed. If dummy presents some weak spot, such as K x, to lead through, or, if on the right, some weak suit to lead up to, it may be better to lead such a suit instead of forcing. But with a strong hand, with four or more trumps yourself, or with trump strength indicated by your partner's play the force is nearly imperative.

4. Not allowing the weak trump hand to ruff.

It seems to be a popular superstition if dummy has a singleton of a suit, although he is the weak trump hand, that it is incumbent upon either adversary to lead an ace instantly and capture the singleton. This is constantly done with great glee, and is usually accompanied with the remark, "I picked that off, anyway!" And yet such a play is a pitiful effort; it precipitates a calamity which should be shunned, in that it makes it possible for the weak trump hand to ruff that suit. If dummy has a singleton or a two-card suit, and is also weak in trumps, he must be so long in the other suits that it will be fairly impossible for him to dis-

card his short suit; it will always be there when the time arrives to play it. Indeed it is most probable that that is the very suit the dealer himself will lead in an effort to make dummy's weak trumps, and it is not a bad principle to work on, that what is a good play for one side is probably bad for the other. Instead of leading and taking out dummy's singleton, it would probably be a far better play to lead trumps and cut off at least a part of the impending ruff. The only danger in this play would be when the dummy also has some strong suit which the dealer might make and discard upon if trumps were led for him.

But when the dealer instead of leading trumps plays deliberately for some short suit in the weak trump hand, then it is almost certain that a trump lead on your part will be of benefit. If the weak hand has only two trumps and you can take them out in two rounds with ace and a low one, you will have exhausted his power to ruff and you may thereby gain largely later.

CHAPTER IX

THE DISCARD

THE writer has always advocated discarding in a no-trump hand from a poor suit, one you do not wish your partner to lead to you. This discard has now been generally adopted for both trump and no-trump hands. Should you be forced to discard from a strong suit, you can indicate it by discarding first a higher and then a lower card; but to the general good player the single discard of the high card is sufficient.

The discard is still the subject of bitter contention and has been threshed out to a wearying extent, but the best players of to-day almost unanimously follow the rules for discard here given. The hard-and-fast strength discard is a kindergarten device, a crutch for lame ducks, a resource for those whose limitation is the memorising of a single fact, and who decline to observe, deduce, or reason. It is attractive in theory but costly in practice. Even in the case of the beginner, to whom it is supposed to be peculiarly valuable, it stunts

his growth, dulls his reasoning powers, and checks his advance in the game.

The following system of rules is based on common sense, is simple, natural, practical, and reasonable:

Rules for Discard

1. There are two principles of discard: first, protection of your own hand, and then information to your partner.

2. When you have but one discard, make that as luminous as possible, taking into account fully dummy's displayed hand.

3. If dummy has a strong or long suit which your partner would be unlikely to change to, don't discard from that suit, but from another one. This will mark the third suit in your hand. Your play is not to show weakness, but to guide him correctly to his next choice.

4. The discard of a two, three, four or five is usually from a suit you do not wish your partner to lead.

5. A reverse discard, first a high card, and then a lower one from the same suit, shows that you have strength in that suit. In playing a reverse discard make your first card as high as possible without loss. In fact, the single discard of a card as high as the seven or

eight or nine, where one discard alone is available, is usually understood as the beginning of a reverse and indicates strength.

6. To discard first from one suit and then from another marks the third suit as probably strong in your hand.

7. To discard twice from the same suit without reversing, asks your partner to change to that one of the other two which best suits his hand, or in which he can best help.

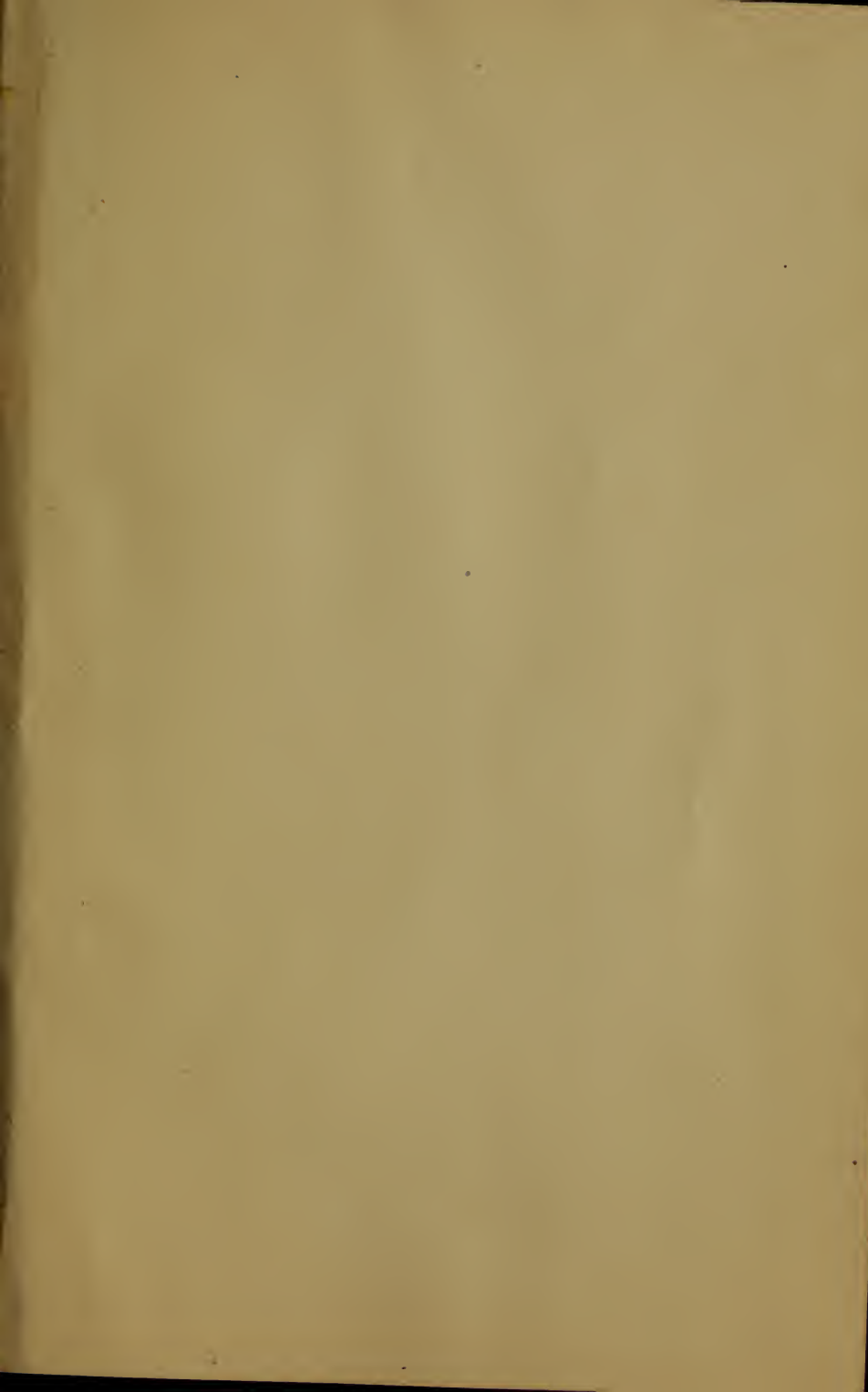
8. The discard of an ace shows other cards equally high in that suit.

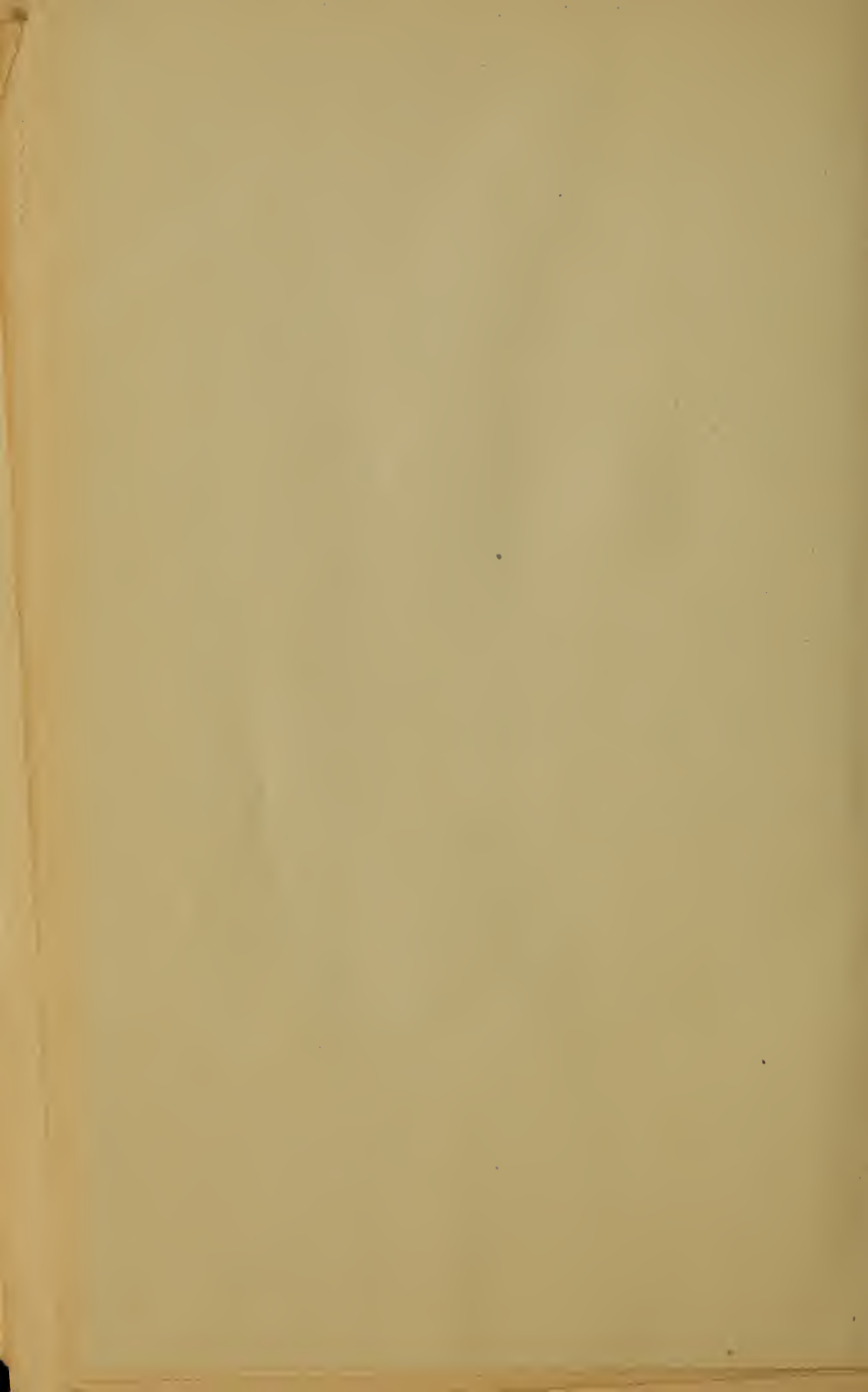
9. The discard of a king shows other cards equally high in that suit, without the ace.

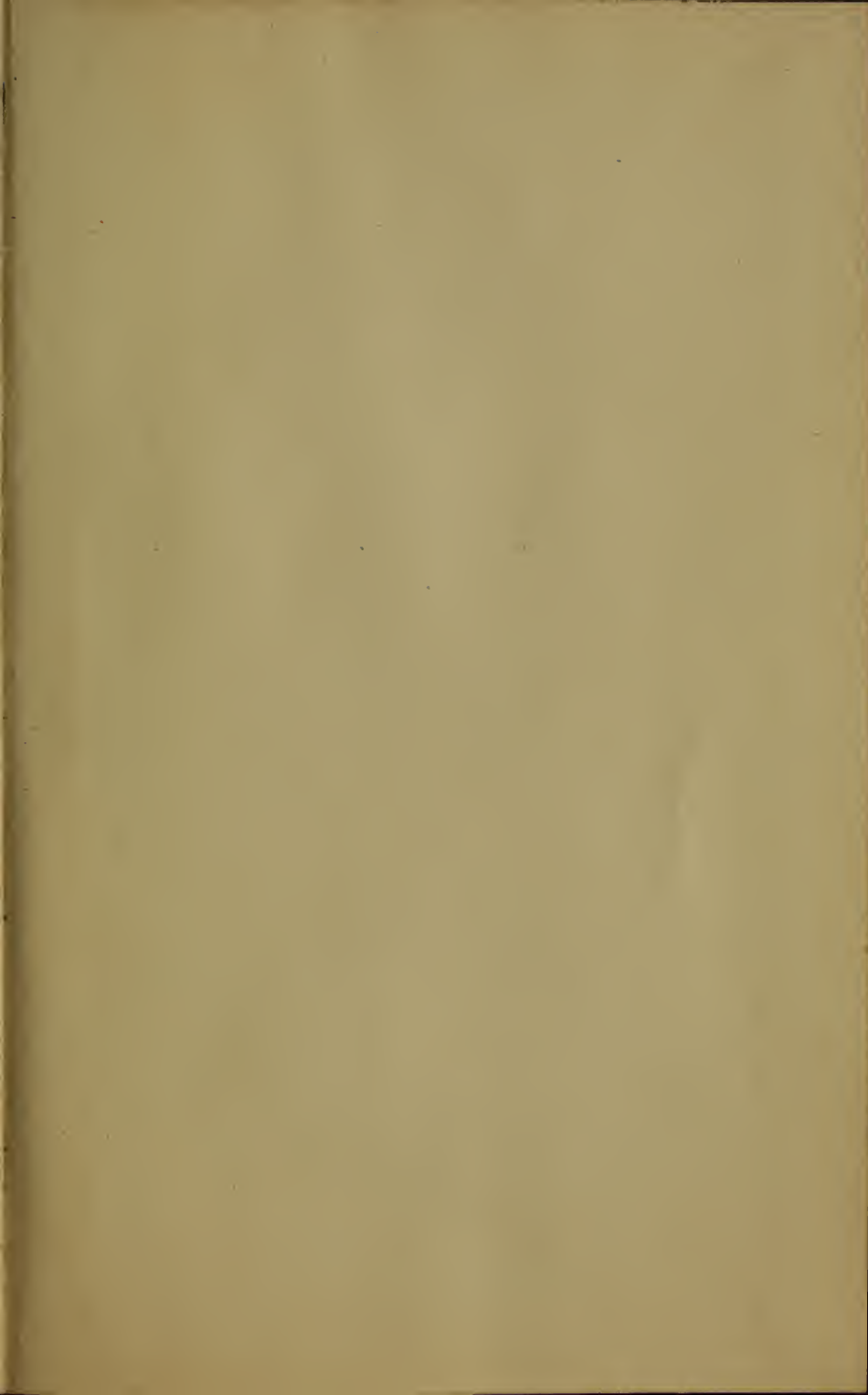
10. Do not discard all, or the only one, of a suit. Save one if possible to follow suit with, the first time.

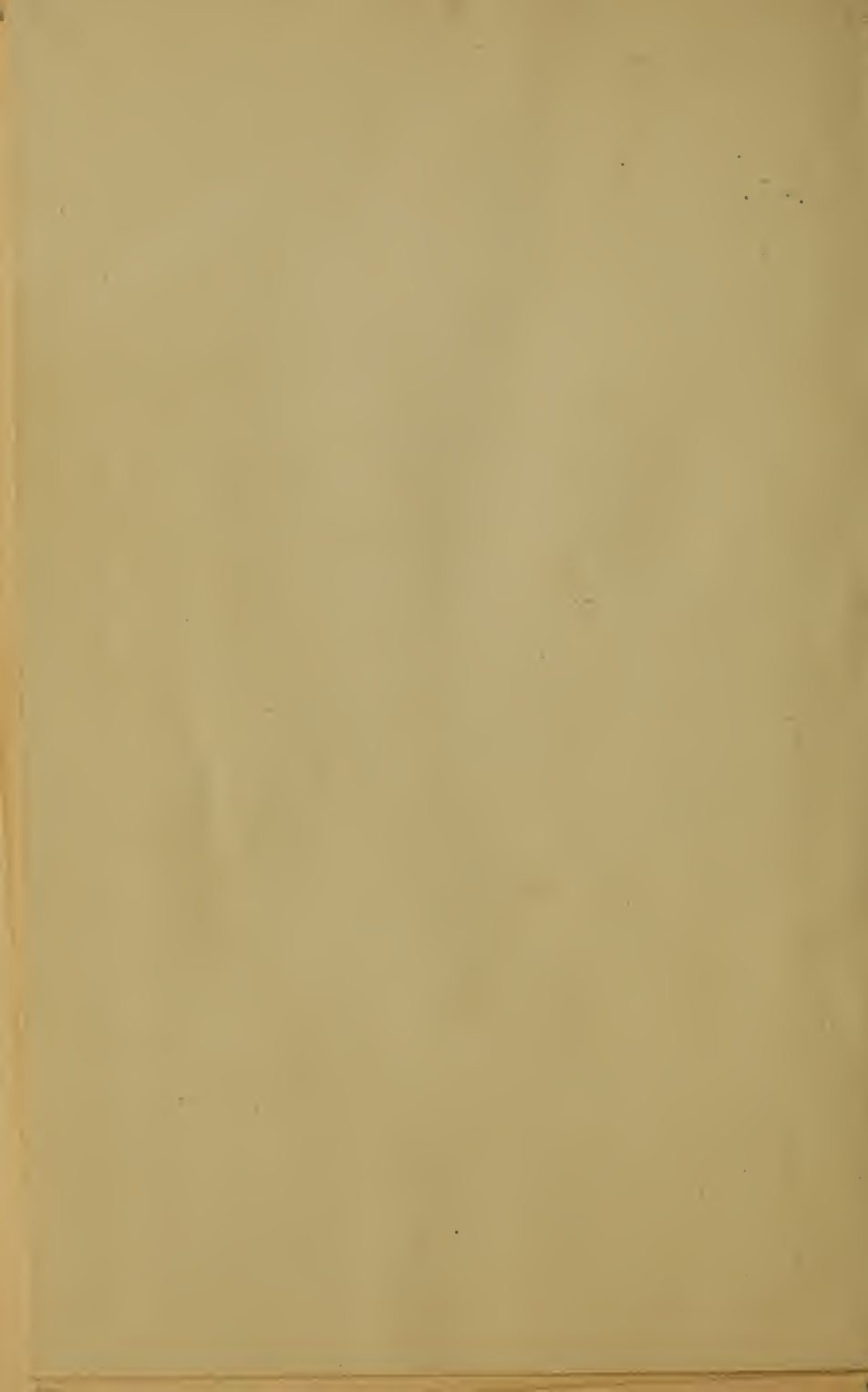
11. If possible, save one of your partner's suit to return to him.

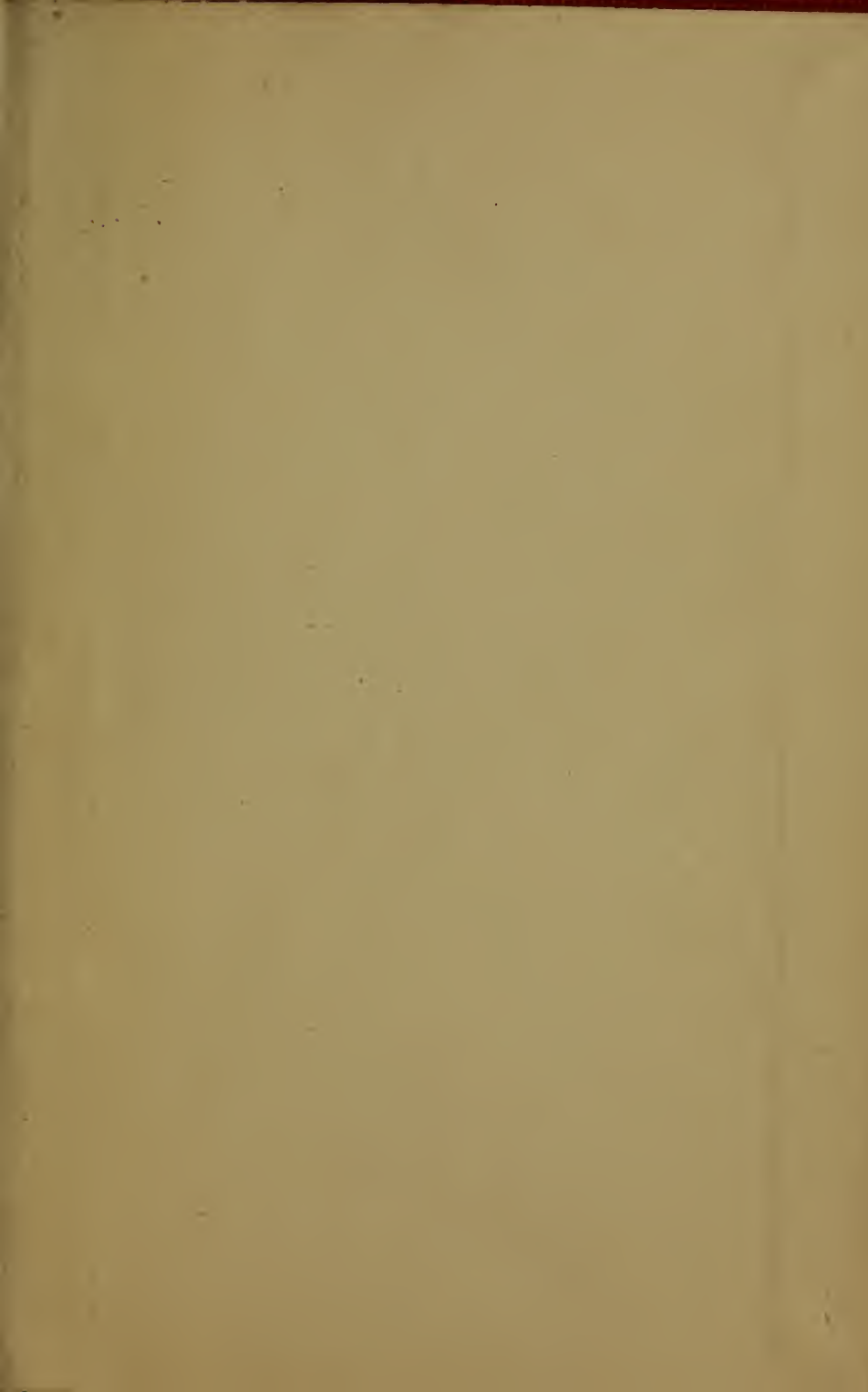
12. Save one guard for an ace or a king, two guards for a queen, and three for a jack or a ten. A jack and two small, or a ten and three small, is a dangerous suit to discard from.



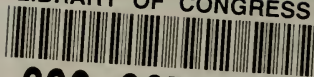








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